

"I love to be wrapped up
and tucked in by the comfy,
deconstructive quilt of Lafia's pure,
endless genius." —A.W. Strouse

The Event of Art

Marc Lafia



***"The Event of Art is a festival of theory
and . . . our way into the bacchanalia
of Marc Lafia."***—Kat Mandeville

The
Event
of Art
Marc Lafia

punctum books

Also by **Marc Lafia**

Image Photograph (2015)

Everyday Cinema: The Films of Marc Lafia (2017)

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**Mathieu
Borysevicz:**
On Marc Lafia

where do we begin?

perhaps with the great luminosity of the sun

in its radiance, in its warmth, in its travel we mark the day...

(Excerpts from *Confessions of an Image*, script for the film, Marc Lafia, 2001.)

It was a few days after 9/11 that I met Marc Lafia for the first time. We were both enrolled in a residency program at the Atlantic Center for the Arts, which was located on an idyllic estuary in the middle of Florida, oddly enough only a stone's throw from where the pilots of the World Trade Center tragedy were trained. There were about ten of us, and many, like myself, had come down in a state of shell-shock from NYC. Marc hailed from San Francisco and seemed like an only child away at camp for the first time. As we mutated between a state of disbelief and despair, our evenings were occupied by alcohol-soaked group critiques, whereby we'd offer up our work to one another. Marc, at his own bequest, was one of the first to present. His film occupied more time than anyone had patience for and was not only monotonous, hard to understand, and droning to the brink of being annoying, but also, given the global atmosphere and my state of mind, brilliantly razor-sharp in message and form.

In the aftermath of 9/11, incessant replaying of destruction footage gave scholars and the public alike enough fodder to examine our schizophrenic, subservient, and often submissive relationship to images. What had been anticipated time and time again in cinema and the public's visual imagination had now been actualized. Lafia's aptly titled *Confessions of an Image* consists of twenty-one short visual and audio essays that interrogate the history, production, distribution and consumption of the photographic image. A series of scratchy and often blurry images captured by his Canon Elph – the ultimate point-and-shoot, which dominated Lafia's practice for many years – plods along to a monologue of the artist himself belligerently pontificating (from what sounds like from far out in the universe) about electromagnetic light criss-crossing the planet.

This is the story of the disappearance of astro physical luminosity as it becomes the pulse of electronic signal of total vision.

(Excerpts from *Confessions of an Image*, script for the film, Marc Lafia, 2001.)

The low-fi aesthetic and voice-of-God narration of the film only worked to foreshadow the instantaneous transmission of the image and the omnipresence of the social network that digital technology was ushering in. Marc was aware that the picture, moving from emulsion to code, would initiate an entirely new relation to photography, one in which our bodies, knowledge, and time would unfold. It was in this envelope of technological transition that Marc's work found its solid ground. Yet while his interest is in the power of the image and its changing universal nature, he also constantly endeavors to make the image one's very own. His pursuit is about the changing notion of subjectivity, of self, against the assault of representation. Do we live against or in tandem with the image?

how can we make a personal film

one that speaks to us about what it is to make an image

the image is both us and not us

the image is something we make to make ourselves to see ourselves

and yet the image disappears. life is greater than the image.

(Excerpts from *Confessions of an Image*, script for the film, Marc Lafia, 2001.)

Within the span of the three-week residency, Marc, like many of us, intoxicated by the creative isolation of the residency against the mayhem abounding through the rest of the world, managed to be hyper-prolific. He created installations, collaborative works, and projections that questioned the role of the body as ubiquitous recording. He said of this phenomenon,

When all is recording, recording is always the possibility of re-recording and so recording becomes ever present and we are spliced and extended into such recording. Our memories, our very thinking, our utterances, always prosthetic and in the clouds.

I should remind you that this was 2001: social media and networked culture was still very much in its infancy, yet Marc was ahead of the curve. He had already had his finger on the growing pulse of the network's potential and role in re-shaping the import of the image. Marc was not only one of the founders of *Art&Culture.com*, one of the first interactive online archives of culture and ideas, but he was also someone who had a long string of credits in music videos and arthouse cinema to his name. These professions and mediums were extremely

fundamental in awakening global culture to a new idea of the image. MTV and the graphic revolution that followed in its wake ushered in with “Video Killed the Radio Star” an era where the picture was now married to music, text, and mainstream culture; one in which ubiquity trumped substance, and where everyone would eventually become an author.

While Marc’s pursuits were very much informed by his meanderings in deconstruction theory, his real creative impulse was dictated by his coming of age with MTV. *Variable Montage, Loops and Iterations, Computations and Permutations* were some of his earliest and most mesmerizing exploits that came after the artist’s introduction to the programming software engine MAX/MSP. These works, while propelled by the variables of an algorithm, possessed a heightened sense of fashionable, quick-cut editing, and a curious interrogation of audio’s relationship with the visual. At a time when our lives were being organized and cataloged into various digital desktop folders, Marc recognized this virtual material not only as artistic resource, but as envelopes of information that mimicked the functions of our own dubious memory. He recycled the audio/visual information that might otherwise be idly parked on a desktop, shuffling it in an abstract, infinite stream of re-sequencing. Digital editing and non-linearity was revolutionizing film and television production at the outset of the twenty-first century, yet much of what was being produced was still predictable, finite, “films” in the conventional sense. Marc’s permutations gave form to deconstruction – often mix-matching visual to audio as if they had everything and nothing to do with one another. With these Marc had achieved non-linearity in the very orthodox sense of the term. The shifting pulsations of these permutations went on potentially infinitely, never repeating, as a chance operation, one that was designated by discrepancies in the program rather than an autonomous “author” or “editor”. Marc read the film projector as a set of instructions and re-wrote it in this easy to use software. This modularity has always been part of Lafia’s interest and yet the resulting effect wasn’t technical but instead highly entertaining, musical, and gregariously poetic.

Snapshots of his wife and children, blurry nature images, museum crowds, and lots of re-photographing – books, films, magazines and signs – filled Marc’s computational works. Street recordings, musical quotes and noise contributed further to the highly stylized, highly trippy, and embellished qualities of the work. While Barthes’s photography was a

kind of Tableau Vivant, a figuration of the motionless and made-up face beneath which we see the dead.

(Roland Barthes *Camera Lucida*, Hill & Wang, 1980.)

Marc overturned the tombstones with the grace of a jib-shot, digitally crossbreeding cinema with photography. In these early works Marc created

a new kind of *mise-en-scène* of the image, using computation not to simply play back recordings, but to continually generate new possibilities, sequences, juxtapositions, and rhythms. Viewing these works is as much an act of spectatorship as it is one of reading and re-reading, with different perspectives creating a rhetorical kaleidoscope.

As we increasingly experience reality as disappearing and reappearing in such a confusing way, and as our memories, and selves have been extended, amplified and dispersed in the info-sphere we ourselves are recursively intermeshed and spliced into new programs, new loops and iterations.

(Marc Lafia, notes to author 2018, unpublished)

Marc would take his interest in recording to interrogate new modes of creating a personal archive and self-organizing computational system. Here, recording is not only memory and data structure, but permutational instrument and ever-changing horizon of iterations.

where is the place where things are remembered?

does a city have, does a country, a neighborhood, any hill, any mountain, have the trace for us that something has happened?

how do we know the story of ourselves?

(Excerpts from *Confessions of an Image*, script for the film, Marc Lafia, 2001.)

Over the years, Marc and I worked together on various projects in various incarnations. I brought him to China on several occasions where he manifested the system of network interactivity in physical space, as a large-scale workshop/ installation in the group exhibition, *dAfT*, at Shanghai Gallery of Art. He later expounded on this at his Minsheng Museum solo show, *Eternal Sunshine*. Lafia's interest in the network has always been its gratuitous offering of information, its performative aspects – that of interactivity, and its ability to twist the notion of subjectivity inside out, before and after, and as a system of ubiquitous recording. For these shows, he created spaces that solicited viewer info, beckoned interactivity, and had a set of rules of engagement similar to the web. He created this as a mini-utopian environment, an endless summer day by the pool, complete with lounge chairs, umbrellas, Ping-Pong tables, KTV machines, and a drum set. Lafia wanted to put the individual into a shared social space, to create and produce a momentary communality, a sociality, a party. People lounged, browsed, played, observed, and were observed. They

gave and received in a framework identical to the network, a hall of mirrors where one watches while being watched. While his work expanded into architectural space and embraced that euphoric sense of being together, Marc never left cinema and the image far behind. In fact it was the mass event of the image, that collective cinematic gaze *à la* Guy Debord's *Society of the Spectacle*, and a general impetus to bring people together that fired Marc's spirit. The image was the catalyst and vehicle that drove these relationships. Throughout his Minsheng Museum exhibition deconstruction, the MTV child would emerge. An epic diptych permutation film that interrogated 1960s international cinema, recordings of his risqué exploits into the world of ChatRoulette, and a new stylistic short video – which depicted a fantastically drunken and rain soaked excursion out of a KTV video – showed Marc's continued infatuation with the mesmerizing light of celluloid.

and so this innate curiosity to understand

to give our selves a sense of being

it is the struggle to tell the story of ourselves

that is life's journey

(Excerpts from *Confessions of an Image*, script for the film, Marc Lafia, 2001.)

Marc went on to do a great many more things, with and without me, and along the way there was always *the* book – Marc's many books: in the reading, in the making, finished and on the shelf, the text never lying far from the image. Surrounded by books, Marc plodded forward through his circuitous oeuvre. In fact, *Confessions of an Image* was a book disguised as a film, or a documentary about the book – the omnipresent pictorial that has become our contemporaneity. It is curious, having breached the frontier of computational cinema and online photography, that one would still land back on the book. The book, alias a medium and form that quantifies as well as it qualifies, what we have learned, what we have imagined, a catalog of ideas and processes, a way for the artist to organize what he has done. Here in this volume you now behold, Marc has pulled back the image and warmly invites us along on his journey.

Mathieu Borysevicz
2019, Shanghai

Daniel Coffeen:
**The Medium
is the Machine:
The Post-Media,
Post-Relational
Work of Marc Lafia**

1. In Through the Network

Marc Lafia has been making images for over 40 years but only started creating what we call art 20 years ago. Trained as a filmmaker, Lafia worked in Hollywood for the likes of David Fincher and Ed Pressman, working on fashion and music videos, writing screenplays based on graphic novels, and directing his own feature.

And then, as he hit 40, the Internet blossomed, introducing a fundamental shift in how images are created, disseminated, and enjoyed. And Lafia found himself at the helm of two back-to-back Internet ventures. First, there was The World Clock – cameras streaming from every time zone, all viewed at once on your desktop, enacting a spatial splaying of temporality, introducing what Marshall McLuhan calls the allatonicness of the electronic age.

And then there was *ArtandCulture.com*, a multidisciplinary guide to the arts – visual, literary, performance, design, film and TV – across time and place. The site won a series of awards (SXSW Best of Show, Art Directors Award, Comm Arts) for its striking interface. Down one side of the screen, there was a hierarchy of all the arts, each distributed according to the logic immanent to it. At the same time, the page was dominated by a Thinkmap-like navigation system. In the middle was your chosen artist, movement, or keyword around which circulated related artists, movements, and keywords. This allowed users to move either vertically into a discipline or horizontally across the arts according to associative logics.

In these details, we begin to see Lafia's *modus operandi*. As he traverses media, he is interested in its circulation as much as its affect, content, or materiality. For Lafia, an image is rarely still. His eye moves from the moving frame of the image to the moving apparatus of *imaging*, of the image-event, of how images come into being and make their way through the world. It's as if the network took up Lafia – and he took up the network with emphatic vim.

But even before his involvement in network culture, he was moving towards a reckoning of the movement of images. Look at his feature film, *Exploding Oedipus*, in which the main character, Hilbert (Bruce Ramsay) checks into a fleabag hotel in San Francisco with nothing but his suitcase of home movies. Hilbert hangs a sheet on which he perpetually screens these movies of his troubling childhood before deciding to explode Oedipus by making his own movie (much as William Burroughs writes himself out of the horror of killing his wife).

Film, here, lives in a suitcase, moving with Hilbert, and has the power to rearrange socio-familial dynamics – to explode Oedipus. In fact, the original title of the movie was *Suitcase*. Isn't Hilbert carrying reels of film the analog version of carrying our smart phones? Lafia was already trying to wrest the image out of the monumental theater and its univocal screen – even though

he was doing so via a feature film projected in theaters. But that would soon change as he left such monumental filmmaking behind, choosing a guerrilla approach to image-making, diving head first into the network apparatus in which viewer and viewed, subject and object, art and everyday image begin to blur at near-infinite speed.

Lafia, then, did not shift from traditional media to new media. Rather, he was always already playing in the electronic age, in the network, where images will never have been tethered to masters and their auditoriums are enmeshed in complex, affective engines of dissemination. Lafia was always and already operating with(in) the event of imaging.

This is where we find Lafia's vastly varied body of work: operating with the terms of image making, re-engineering how images move and perform, playing with the terms of production, dissemination, viewing, and enjoyment. (I want to be careful, however, in saying this. From one perspective, Lafia is a theorist of the image. But his theory and his practice are one and the same just as it is for Paul Klee, Jeff Wall, Andy Warhol. Lafia's work is rarely didactic and is almost always something to behold.)

But I want to suggest that such are the conditions of making art today. The digital network has superseded and redistributed the analog terms in which there is an artist, a medium, and a subject (however abstract, expressive, or conceptual). We now live within a techno-social infrastructure in which everything is recorded – on smart phones, surveillance cameras, credit card transactions – as our identities are quantified and commoditized in likes, purchases, and tweets.

We are no longer inundated with media; we have *become* media. This is not Guy Debord's Society of the Spectacle; this is the Society of Karaoke. We don't *see* media; we *perform* media. Our behavior – our identity – has become the product.

This inaugurates a radical shift in the machine of image-making in general and art in particular. The way desires are hooked into the technological apparatus, the way the image-maker – we are all at once image and image-maker – stands towards the world, the way we all stand towards each other: these now run along digital, plastic lines of circulation and force. For the artist, the image is no longer a means of expression in search of a medium; the image is itself a site of identity creation and relation. Images are no longer a way to explore social relations – they're no longer comments, critiques, or expressions. They are themselves events of social and relational (re)distribution.

Lafia is well poised for this world, coming from film before entering art through the network. He is a truly contemporary artist, operating with what McLuhan calls the *environment* of today's world – the very structures in which images are created, circulated, indexed, and consumed. So while Lafia may not have a traditional medium – I will argue that there is no such thing anymore – he does in fact have one consistent medium: imaging making itself, its apparatus of creation, consumption, and circulation.

II. Disappearance of the Medium

Feature films, fabrics, a series of loosely narrative long films shot on the fly on video, command-shift-4 snapshots, oil paintings, an algorithmic reworking of *The Battle of Algiers*, an award-winning immersive website, multi-screen computational projections, 3D metal totems, videogame-scapes, re-photographs, participatory installations. While Marc Lafia is perhaps best known as a network and computational artist, it's hard to pin any medium on him.

Of course, lots of artists have spanned media. But most of the time the work is underwritten by a *visual* style – Picasso's paintings, prints, and sculptures are all of an ilk. We can *see* it – his faces, composition, lines, motifs, and subject matter are all something that makes us say, "Hey, I know that! That's Picasso!"

Lafia doesn't have such a visual style. We can't find it in his line or even his subject matter. He has a style, of course, a way of operating with media. But that style isn't situated at the juncture of hand and material.

Such is how we imagine art, artists, and style: it lives in the relationship between individuals, materials, and a will to expression. We take this so for granted that it can seem odd to even say it. But this is how we imagine art: artists have great things to express – depths of emotion, experiences, critiques of the world – and they're just looking for a medium to carry their message.

This discourse of art, this imagining of art, is premised on a certain architecture of experience in which artist (a person), expression (ideas, experiences, feelings), material (paint, code, camera), and viewer (me and you!) exist within a prescribed set of relations. The artist has things to say, feelings and ideas to express. The materials carry the message to us.

Our museums, galleries, and websites assume this model in which artists seek a medium to express themselves to an audience. We call know our place, our role. As viewers, we stand a certain distance from the work and look. Then, if not first, we read the placard next to the work that follows a template – title, date, materials, owner, and perhaps a little biographical or historical information. While we might not like or understand a work (whatever that means), we do know it is indeed a work of art and that that it's our job to decipher and judge. The whole experience of art, we believe, is an act of expression in which the medium carries the message from artist to us. The medium remains a medium, carrying meaning, feeling, or perspective.

The styles and materials may change but the *architecture of the experience* remains the same: artist < > materials < > viewer. We see different stories and different materials but we know our role, we know the role of media, we know the role of the artist.

Lafia's work unsettles this architecture. For Lafia, the medium is not, in fact, a medium at all: it was never a carrier of messages. But even this is not necessarily radical or new *per se*. For instance, when Duchamp put a urinal

in a gallery and entitled it *Fountain*, he wasn't expressing himself through a material. The porcelain was not his medium. No, the material of *Fountain* is the discourse of art – what it is, how it comes to be, how we experience it. We are not seeing Duchamp express himself through porcelain. And, unlike Picasso, Duchamp's style does not exist at the intersection of artist and material. Duchamp shifts the very architecture of the art experience – the distribution of bodies and set of expectations.

Now, all artists manipulate discourse, reconfiguring the experience – whether it's content, posture, form, or perceptive relations. In fact, I want to say that the history of art is a history of the shifting terms of the art experience – from the role of the artist (master, DJ, conduit) to medium (paint, carcass, code) to what counts as content (noblemen, prostitutes, moods) to the role of the audience (viewer, participant, dupe) to modes of perception (negative space, delirium, synesthesia). This is all that art is rarely content to just be expression; at some point, in myriad ways, art (re)casts relations within the very experience of art.

The art critic Nicolas Bourriaud defines relational aesthetics as art that involves

“a set of artistic practices which take as their theoretical and practical point of departure the whole of human relations and their social context, rather than an independent and private space” (Bourriaud 113).

In Bourriaud's relational aesthetics, art does not demand an artist expressing herself through material. Rather, art at once disrupts and creates a set of social relations.

Bourriaud invokes Rirkrit Tiravanija's 1992 show in which Tiravanija cooks Thai food for visitors. The art is not the food; the food is not the medium; and Tiravanija is not cook as artist. In this case, art is the event of communing of and between visitors, shuffling the architecture of the art experience. There is no object to be viewed, no signature or style to be perceived. And rather than sight being privileged, Tiravanija democratizes the senses as smell, taste, sound, and touch are all equally important – a recasting of perceptual relations. Meanwhile, the artist is no longer a master expressing his great ideas and feelings; he is now a facilitator of relations in which there is no master or central term. This, in turn, recasts the role of the viewer who is no longer a viewer at all but is at once constitutive and constituent of the event – a participant, as much an object as a subject. (As a side note, Burning Man with its mantra of “no spectators” has to be considered one of the more concerted movements within relational aesthetics.)

Bourriaud's relational art is not just confined to event-based works. He considers Andrea Zittel as she recreates everyday spaces. If Duchamp's *Fountain* folds the discourse of art into the work, Zittel folds the environment of everyday living – housing, objects, space – into her work. In her own words, her art is

an ongoing endeavor to better understand human nature and the social construction of needs.

For Bourriaud, Zittel and Tiravanija shift the purview of art. It is no longer the stuff, the medium: it is now the social relations that the stuff hedges and reorganizes. Those relations are not just an effect of the work; they *are* the work.

In this sense, we can consider Marc Lafia's work to be relational aesthetics. In his 2011 installation *Eternal Sunshine*, at the Minsheng Museum of Art in Shanghai, visitors found themselves in a room with a faux pool and toys, beach chairs, a drum set and guitar, a karaoke machine, ping-pong table, and a chalkboard where visitors were asked to share their desires. This enacted or, better, "put on" the presumed utopia of social media. This work focuses on social relations – how we understand ourselves in the social as we exist within different mediascapes.

But while Lafia's work overlaps with "the whole of human relations and their social context," he is up to something else – something that is at once Duchampian and relational and neither: he takes up the very precise yet sprawling mechanics of how images are created, disseminated, consumed, enjoyed, and valued. Human desire, human understanding, human relations – not to mention history, power, desire, along with non-human forces – are, for Lafia, the very stuff of the image, *necessarily*.

For Lafia, the image is not a way to question art as it is for Duchamp. Nor is it a way to explore social relations, as it is for Bourriaud. No, for Lafia, the image is itself an assemblage of relations and forces of every sort. The image is not first and foremost expressive of something; the image is performative – it *does* things.

Lafia's work *puts on* the imaging apparatus – history, technology, semiotics, economics, perceptive architecture – as one might put on a costume. If Zittel's art is a way to understand human needs, Lafia's art is not a means or a method to understand *per se* precisely because the image is not outside of human relations. We don't *use* images, at least not anymore. We *are* images. For Lafia, the image today is necessarily a (re)casting of relations – social, aesthetic, financial, discursive, perceptive, institutional. Art is not a way to unpack or reveal these things; it is itself a nexus where history, culture, the social, money, and desire are assembled and (re)distributed.

For Lafia, art doesn't have a medium because *there is nothing to mediate*. Art is no longer a messenger of feelings or ideas; it is the massage, working us – and the world – over (*pace* Marshall McLuhan).

In the media age, art relies on a certain model in which the artist is not art, is not an image – much as a scientist is not part of experiment. Our media artist has something to say – a feeling, an idea, information, a critique. She is drawn to a certain tool – oil paints, a 35 mm camera, computer code – which she then uses to convey what she wants to say. She creates an image as her expression, as a means to an end.

But in the post-media age, these distinctions are superseded by a different logic and a different set of operations – a Bergsonian world. The early 20th

century French philosopher, Henri Bergson, argues that everything is an image – even

“the brain is only an image among other images” (*Matter and Memory*).

For Bergson, this is not an esoteric or provocative claim. Everything is image in that everything is perceived – my body, your body, my blood, nerves, brain, the planets, these words. The universe is an aggregate of images. For Bergson, the fact that we have ascribed a special value to certain things, such as the brain, has caused us to ask “false” questions of the world to which we end up answering with the magic or divinity of the soul, of human being. And then we’re perplexed at how these things that are so different – the brain, the soul – can conceive of the physical, sensual world. For Bergson, however, perception is not a crossing over of different things – stuff and soul; rather, it’s all stuff going with stuff. In which case, the image that is the artist interacts with other images – say, oil paint, canvas, landscape, the history of art – and their interaction creates another image, namely, a painting. It’s all images going with images.

The contemporary techno-social infrastructure – network-surveillance culture – has made Bergson’s claim an everyday, explicit fact of life. Every moment is a moment *of and for* social media. We no longer *record* special events – parties, kids walking, ball games – as a way to remember. Photography has become so ubiquitous, so pervasive, we no longer await the camera. Today, we are already performing for the camera before there’s a click and *cheese*.

Suddenly, the medium – the always-on camera of network-surveillance culture – is no longer a way to explore social relations: it has fundamentally shifted social relations. For instance, as Lafia has performed and argued, there is no more photography. That is, there is no more artist-camera-object architecture, no discrete practice and set of behaviors that involve the camera capturing something for a viewer to later see. No, the camera has enmeshed itself within the very fabric of identity. It’s not what we use to capture the world. The camera, our medium, has become an element in the classical sense, like fire and air, that shapes personal and collective identities. We wear our cameras as we do a physical appendage, an extension of our eyes and ears.

And an image is no longer just something we make and look at. *We are image*. Life in this new world, this post-media age, is all moving image, cinema, an *immediate* experience of images going together according to prescribed algorithms driven by profit, inherited notions of sense, and enculturation’s many bigotries. We don’t *use* images; we *circulate with* images, an element of algorithmic distribution.

And these algorithms are image, too. We are enmeshed in them, at once constitutive and constituent, much like participants in Rirkrit Tiravanija’s Thai food art show. We consume and are consumed and our consumption changes the way we are consumed and the way we are consumed shifts our consumption. It’s a fractal feedback loop, endlessly rewriting itself. We are neither the object

nor the subject of the camera: we are defining elements within the imaging apparatus. *There is no longer any mediation. Stuff is no longer conduit of expression. The stuff of expression has taken us up until we are the stuff of expression along with camera, film, screen, paint, software, discourse. There's no gap between artist, material, and viewer that requires a medium: we are all elements within the imaging apparatus. It's all immediate! It's all this life happening now (and before and later)!*

For Lafia, the image is not a medium, not a *means*. Rather, as Jacques Rancière argues, an image is itself a distribution of the sensible (as long as we understand the sensible to incorporate the visible and invisible, material and incorporeal). The image distributes material, percepts, affects, and concepts. An image is an assembling, a local nexus of a variety of forces – financial, libidinal, physical, social. While relational aesthetics uses and *enacts* the image to explore and perform social relations, Lafia operates with images that always already include, reorient, and redistribute social relations. I understand that this distinction may seem pedantic. But in this seemingly subtle shift an entirely new order of things emerges with rippling implications for how we make sense of art and each other. In any case, it helps us understand the artist at hand, Marc Lafia.

In *Fountain*, Duchamp displaces the material object as the focus of the work; we are instead confronted with our own notions of art. Tiravanija, too, displaces the object as art become the emergent event. In both cases, what we call the work is more than the object. But, unlike them, Lafia is a materialist taking up the thingness of the imaging apparatus. A cursory glance at the images in this book lets you know that Lafia relishes the stuffiness of stuff, the sumptuousness of perception. He's not just making us think; he's giving us something to sensually enjoy.

And most of the time Lafia's work is not participatory in the common sense. Unlike, say, Marina Abramović's *The Artist is Present*, Lafia's work doesn't await visitors. His work is more akin to a traditional painting in that it persists with or without viewers. Critiquing the limitation of relational aesthetics, Claire Bishop argues that Thomas Hirshhorn's work is

"no longer tied to the activation of the viewer, or to their literal participation in the work" (78).

Like Hirshhorn, Lafia doesn't forge events via happenings; Lafia proffers objects that are themselves events – events that redistribute an imaging apparatus that includes the social, history, and desire.

Lafia's medium – not his focus, not his content – is the very mechanics of the imaging apparatus. It is this sense, Lafia's work is what Félix Guattari calls *post-media* in that there is no longer any issue of a carrier of expression, no question of a go-between, of a medium. For Lafia and post-media artists, the image is not a means. Nor does it stage events. Rather, the image is *an event of assembling* the world, of (re)making the world, taking up and distributing bodies, history, concepts, and affects, what Deleuze and Guattari would call

re- and de-territorializing, undoing some identities and relations, fucking with others, all while creating a new, different territory.

Unlike Zittel, Lafia is not interested in *using* art to understand human nature or human needs. Nor is he “political” in the sense of engaging “issues” in the news – which doesn’t mean he’s not political. As Rancière argues, and Nietzsche before him, art is always already political in that it distributes the sensible. What could be more political than that? Art becomes the very stuff of the political, arranging and re-arranging bodies and their relations. Hito Steyerl writes

“A standard way of relating politics to art assumes that art represents political issues in one way or another. But there is a much more interesting perspective: the politics of the field of art as a place of work. Simply look at what it does – not what it shows” (93).

From this perspective, Lafia is a Nietzschean for whom art is neither means nor ornament but is itself world-making. Art needs no justification. It is a creative, distributive event. For Nietzsche, art is the original act of man. All this other stuff – science and the great edifices of knowledge – is art that’s forgotten it’s art and decided to call itself truth. Art is the ever-shifting event of sense making; the image is a moving site that takes up the social, semiotic, affective, financial, and libidinal economies into a localized assemblage that declares: *Here. This.*

So while Lafia has been called a network or .net artist, that label relies on the concept of medium as a tool of expression. The contemporary moment, this post-media condition, demands and enacts a different relationship between artist, medium, and audience.

Bourriaud was no doubt going after just such a thing in his invocation of relational aesthetics – it’s not the object or the artist that matters but the event. But, for Bourriaud, art is still a distinct, discrete practice that plays with the world, explores and understands the world. Lafia, however, operates with a different premise: art is an operation performed from within the always-on imaging apparatus, within a world that is relentlessly making itself as image. The image is both a condition and producer of relations.

But before we abandon this word *medium*, I want to pause for a moment and consider it. On the one hand, a medium is a means to an end, a tool that mediates an experience, taking us from here to there. We use paint, clay, or code to express something such as emotion, understanding, or a worldview. This is often how we figure art: it is not intrinsic to the world but is a way to express something about that world. This assumes that there is the world, there is us, and then there is image.

But in today’s always-on ubiquitous imaging, this distinction no longer holds. The technology infrastructure has realized Henri Bergson’s vision in which everything is image (“You may say that my body is matter, or that it

is an image: the word is of no importance So the body is but a privileged image . . .”). The post-media era is not, as Guattari suggests, an era of *any-medium-whatsoever*. It’s an era in which *there is no longer any medium, any mediation: we are all always already image, always putting on the image, always at once imaging and being imaged*. From social media to surveillance cameras to credit card transactions, the line between world and image has been effaced.

“The human race, misled by burlesque heroes made of deceptive electromagnetic substances, lost faith in the reality of life, and started believing only in the infinite proliferation of images” (Franco Berardi, Steyerl, 6).

The very structures of the world are the terms of imaging. The Internet is a vast always-on camera, imaging to infinity. This is not a Society of the Spectacle in which the image pervades our emotional economy, co-opting the pleasure principle; it has become a *society of the performative* in which we are always already putting on the world, always imaging, the line between identity and image effaced once and for all. A better figure than Guy Debord’s Spectacle is karaoke in which we become the spectacle as we perform the spectacle.

This is not to say that this disappearance of the medium means there are no great painters, printmakers, photographers working today. That would be as absurd as it would be both insane and false. It is to say, however, that painting, printmaking, and photography are no longer media *per se*. Each has the power to become a technology that takes on, puts on, and re-engineers the imaging-event from within the image-machine. Using digital technologies does not make one post-media as that would still ascribe to the category of medium. Lafia’s relentless movement between media does not make him post-media. Peter Wiebel, writing of the “post-media condition,” says

“no single medium is dominant any longer; instead, all of the different media influence and determine each other.”

But that is an *operation* of the post-media condition, not its *condition*. The rise of the digital, the computational, and network has radically transformed the very nature and possibility of media.

A medium is no longer something an artist uses to express herself, to tell a story, to portray the world. Not only is mimesis moot – having been supplanted decades ago by the hyper-real – the very existence of a medium has vanished. We now live in an always-on imaging-event as the network relentlessly records, disseminates, and displays our every move. The imaging-event is not a discrete act; it is the very condition of life. We no longer *make* images; we perform *as* image; we operate *with* images. The image is no longer an expression of; it (re) makes the world.

Post-media is the condition of art no longer being, or needing, a medium. Lafia operates within the contemporary conditions of always-on imaging in

which art doesn't seek the real, understanding, revelation, or even expression. To make art in the post-media age is to move and operate within a machine, reworking and rewiring from within the world of images and their production precisely because there is no outside.

Look at his film, *The Revolution of Everyday Life* (shot according to instructions with the so-called director mostly absent). We encounter scenes – or, better, we encounter encounters – that have only come into being because the camera was present. We see sense emerging. We see faces and people and love and the social emerge not just *for* the camera but *with* the camera. (Warhol understood this well; his screen tests are an incredible testament to this post-medial reality). In the exquisite scenes of the women alone recording themselves – scenes that are private, exhuming, creative, peculiar – we come to understand that the camera is a presence, a kind of face that grasps and inspires. The recording event – which, in this digital world, is a playback event, as well – does not just record: it *creates* events.

It is in this sense that Lafia has no medium other than the imaging apparatus – camera and paint, yes, but also the desktop, the network, the history of art and imaging, the surveillance camera along with the complex financial and libidinal economies. It is in this sense that Lafia is a post-media artist: his images have no need to mediate anything. They are world-making.

But the word medium has another and related sense: being in the middle, between here and there. And this is precisely where we find Lafia operating – in-between. He doesn't look through a camera lens to capture something. He situates himself within the imaging apparatus itself, neither behind the camera nor in front of it but in the middle. In this sense, Lafia does have a medium: that medium place between canvas and object in which the image emerges and becomes the fray of life.

Using this notion of medium, his work is indeed relational, perhaps nothing but. It flourishes in the middle, in the connections between elements. Lafia might call this the imaging-event – the very act of assembling, and disassembling, the imaging apparatus so that new possibilities and relations emerge.

Take his aptly titled work, *Pictures* – a deadpan title that speaks to Lafia's relentless sense of play. He takes up images from the history of global art and layers them in different ways with different degrees of bleed and intensity, images inflecting each other across time, a ricochet of affect, representational modes, and media creating an ever-shifting conversation – in a word, an event. If Tiravanija's work facilitates an event in which visitors become participants, Lafia creates an event – equally open-ended and emergent – at the site of the image.

In a move that supersedes both Duchamp and Bourriaud, Lafia – in *Self-Portrait*, one piece within the *Pictures* collection – incorporates what seems like his reflection into the body of the image. The result is a kind of origami that folds artist as creator, artist as subject, the technology of reflection, and multiple images from the history of art into the frame. Mind you, Lafia's work is never willy-nilly. I use "origami" here intentionally as his work is highly technical. He

carefully, though playfully, folds the history and technology of art into a new image, a new *kind* of image, using the imaging apparatus to create more images that operate along new lines of force and intensity and modes of sense making. As in Duchamp's *Fountain*, we don't just see the image; we see a particular angle on the image-machine. And as in relational aesthetics, we experience an emergent event – only the emergence takes place at the site of the image, *as* the image.

III. Reprogramming from Within

In the media world, the artist takes up materials as a way to say what's on her mind, then displays it for the viewer. The artist and the viewer exist in their respective worlds and may or may not come together at the site of the image.

In the post-media world, however, conditions are different: there is no outside the image apparatus – not for the artist, the viewer, the material, or the art. They are all produced, and constitutive of, an elaborate image-machine. This is Bergson's argument: everything is image. Or, better, *everything is imaging: the endless production, repetition, and mutation of images*. Images are no longer neutral conveyors of information from artist to viewer. Artist and viewer are images. Art is images. Blood, brain, ideas, sky, news, these words here are images. Everything happens from within the imaging apparatus. There is no place where we frolic happily until we decide to make an image. *We are always already images being produced, morphed, inflected, enjoyed (or not!). There is no outside the image-machine just as there is no inside. Image production is the very condition of existence.*

One way to view this is to consider Google image search, your Facebook feed, and a museum. All three function as a way to make sense of information and to display it. They are how images and information are processed and played back. There is no way outside of these algorithms of creation, selection, and display; we are always looking at images that have been processed and placed here or there. The same goes with our friends, our work, life on city streets: it seems random, perhaps, as just the way things go. But it's all been processed, all played back according to more or less complex algorithms of labor, trains, consumption, culture, class, race. As we make our way through the city, we are not outside these algorithms: we are at once constitutive and constituent, making and being made. We all live within the apparatus – the techno-capitalist apparatus, the sense-making apparatus: the image-machine.

If we all live within the imaging-machine, as constitutive of the imaging apparatus, the artist is no longer a genius who sees differently and comes to share it with us. She is now an engineer-hacker who, like Neo in the Matrix, hacks the terms of the imaging-event from within the imaging-event.

Consider *This Moment Always Already Recording*, in which Lafia spends days on the infamous ChatRoulette.com, interacting and recording his interactions. Who is artist? What is the content? Who is the audience? What is the product –

documentary photography? Film? Portraiture? It is all and none of this: it is a re-wiring of the imaging-event from within the imaging-event, taking up photojournalism, confession, Gonzo, performance art, the peep show, and social media in order to create new flows and interconnections, new modes of imaging – how images are taken, framed, perceived. This is not an exploration of the “whole concept of identity” or the beauty and/or horror of social media, even if those are byproducts of the work. No, Lafia creates a new kind of imaging-event, grabbing images and their semiotic, libidinal, and economic value as he himself is an image with semiotics, libidinal, and economic value. He does not sit outside and comment or inflect. He is within the art, always and already, another term within the image economy and, from the vantage, creates new flows of images.

Or take another post-media work, Christian Marclay’s *Video Quartet*. There are four screens side-by-side, each playing a clip from an existing movie – the screech of Steve McQueen’s car, the famous banjo plucking of an inbred Southern boy from *Deliverance*, Jessica Lange singing as Patsy Cline all somehow working together to form a new piece of music. If you shut your eyes, you can hear the piece coalesce as if it were a traditionally composed symphony.

Marclay situates himself within the image apparatus, within the proliferation of images, and re-engineers from there. He grabs all these images, assembles them, DJs them into a new emergent shape that redistributes the architecture of the art experience – how we look, how our senses are distributed. The piece is impossible to see: How can you even view four screens at once? How is this piece to be viewed? How is it to be listened to? There is no right way. We make it up as we go along, different flickers seizing our attention here, then there, then there. All those propitious collisions of found clips belying the mastery of our eyes yet cohering in the ear, an accident at a time. It’s delirious! There will never have been any mastery – not by Marclay, not by viewers, not by any theorist. There is no outside: we’re watching images we know redistributed according to different terms and hence creating new sense – the algorithm being rewritten in front of us.

In his *Permutations* Lafia deploys a multi-screen as well, literally creating a new kind of projector as part of re-engineering the imaging apparatus. While Marclay creates new kinds of image events by distributing images according to the logic of symphonic music, Lafia creates a series of rules, re-engineering the dominant algorithms of image display and circulation – whether at work in social media feeds, search engines, museums, or movie theaters – according to set of instructions:

1. All images are created on the same day (in this case, an image is a video clip).
2. There is no post-production – no editing of the images, no filters, no sound added.
3. The artist chooses which images will appear in the final form; he is not obligated to choose all the images from that day.

4. The images are displayed in a grid of 1, 3, 6, 9, or 12 screens.
5. While all the images move simultaneously, we only hear the sound of one playing at a time. When the sound of the first image is done, we hear the sound of the second; then the third, and so on. The film ends when the sound of the final image is done.

Marclay immerses himself in the stream of public images – film and TV. Lafia, however, grabs clips from everywhere and anywhere – his family, movies, books, street scenes – creating a different flow of images, a different hack of the image algorithms we know. Lafia blurs the line between private and public image: a Modigliani painting as it lies in a book; kids laughing at a party; shadows cast on some wall, somewhere; a black workman speaking French; disembodied hands scrubbing a wall. It all belies and recasts expectation. These images are not markers of memory or records of events. They are sense-affects ricocheting off each other, forging strange new alliances. In a world in which everything is image, here we experience radical juxtapositions in which images read images, ricocheting off each other, harmonizing with each other, to create new senses, new histories, new libidinal value, new cultural value. *Permutations* is dizzying yet immanently coherent.

Permutations is not expressive *per se*. It's not a diary or manifesto. Like the writing of Georges Perec, from whom Lafia's title is taken, this work is groundless – there is no master term, no truth to which the art is beholden. Lafia is not behind the images, outside of the images. Even within the terms of the piece, there is no master as the relationship between the visual and the aural has been severed, ensuring that neither explains the other. The sound does not function as a caption to the visual; the sound is neither explanation nor ornament. For instance, we see a page turning as we hear music: is there a relationship between the two effects and affects? The music does not tell us how to feel; the visual is not an illustration of the music. The relationship is not one of conceptual conspiracy. And yet there is necessarily a relationship between the visual and the aural in any given image as well as between the aural of one image and the visual of any other image. This is an event, sense emerging rather than being packaged and delivered. If Marclay's images are organized according to the logic of music, Lafia's *Permutations* are organized by a sense that emerges within each instance.

In *Permutations*, we can't separate this blur of sense at the content level from the blur of sense at the consumption level. Yes, the relationship between these images is emergent and complex, belying readymade categories of private and public, memory and art, found and created. The question is: *How are we to even watch these films?* Not only has the sense of the content been reconfigured; the very apparatus of consumption has, as well.

In the monolithic screen of TV and cinema, we know just where to look: the screen is the stage where all the action unfolds before our eyes. But *Permutations* scatters the gaze. Our eyes scan this way and that, at once focusing

on particular moments, gestures, sounds, sentiments, while taking in the whole. These *Permutations* are not just gestalt (although the role and function and relative priority of the gestalt shifts from film to film, from permutation to permutation); the radical particularity of this or that image within the film resists general consumption. We become fixed on this or that image, even as our vision is inundated from the periphery. Or else we keep scanning, focusing for a fleeting moment here then moving on, trying to get a perspective of the whole, a perspective that rarely coalesces (it depends on the film).

Permutations, then, radically reprograms the architectonics of film and the algorithmic flow of images we know within the everyday imaging algorithm. The reel has been consumed by the computational. One of Lafia's great discoveries is that we don't have to run films through univocal projectors, through a technology that begs for linearity. This is not to say that all projector-run films are linear, that there aren't great films that move in multiple directions even as they wind their way through their reel. There are hundreds of great examples, from Welles to Antonioni to Greenaway to Lynch. But Lafia's work marks a disjuncture, a lateral leap, a fundamentally different way of thinking film as well as the image – its creation as well as its consumption.

The reality is we are fed images every day according to logics we don't question until the algorithm annoys us and we complain to Facebook or Twitter. Lafia's *Permutations* offers us a feed of images distributed according to new algorithms of immanent sense rather than according to the logics of targeted marketing, timelines, individuals, or even meta-image themes. That is to say, today's image apparatus packages images according to a predominantly capitalist logic, algorithms driven by profit-motive, bourgeois sentimentality, and quantified activity. Operating within this image-machine in which photos of family stream alongside famous works of art and ads, Lafia hacks the algorithm, redirecting the flow of images, creating sense that tears at the capitalist frenzy of our image feeds. As we experience *Permutations*, we are inside the image apparatus as it is re-cast around us as new ways of making sense continuously emerge.

One way to view Lafia's *Permutations* is as an alternate algorithm – different from a Facebook feed, TV shows, movies, and ads. After *Permutations*, all of those things become image-machines, too. They are no longer the norm to Lafia's art. They are all potentially art; they are all image-apparatus. The artist's job in this post-media world is not just to make new images but new kinds of images with new modes of production, consumption, and sense.

There is not outside anymore – not for the artist, the material, or the viewer. All images (re)constitute the apparatus from within the apparatus, as the apparatus. Most images flow according to prevailing algorithms. There used to be the algorithms of network television, the disturbingly uniform manner in which images were created and disseminated to America. Andy Kaufman was an early post-media artist who sought to re-engineer those terms of image making, the basic architecture of perceptual relations, the algorithms of

sense. Today, we have FAANG – Facebook (and Instagram), Apple, Amazon, Netflix, and Google all using disturbingly similar algorithms of sense to create and distribute images. To be an artist today, then, demands rewriting those algorithms from within the network, reprogramming the machine, writing new instructions for image making, consumption, and sense.

IV. The Image-Machine

Programmatic art and instructions aren't new. Hans Ulrich Obrist's *Do It: The Compendium* from 2013 presents a series of such artists. Yoko Ono's exquisite gossamer instructions, Brion Gysin and William Burroughs's cut-ups, Raymond Queneau and Oulipo: the 20th century saw interest in taking on the terms of art production rather than the content of the art. As Marshall McLuhan argues, the medium rather than the content became the message: it's no longer about what's on TV but the TV itself, the behaviors it coerces and enacts. Rather than operating in given terms of production, these artists seek to reprogram the terms themselves. The medium is no longer a means of expression: the medium has become the machine – the image-machine.

I use the word machine purposefully. It's not just a code or an algorithm. A machine is materialist, even if inclusive of concepts, ideas, forces, and affects. A machine is productive: it includes the selectivity of an algorithm, the logic of code, the materials and technology of a factory, the conceptual and semiotic mechanisms of history, geography, and culture. A machine is the manner in which all of these things work together to hedge and direct forces this way and that to such and such an effect. (I am not suggesting a Hobbesian mechanistic view of the world. Machinesprehend mechanisms but are not mechanistic *per se*.)

But while a machine produces, it is not a means by which something in particular is made such as, say, a paper clip. A machine is a specific set of interconnected operations that interrupt, hedge, and direct flows. There is no purpose or end point, no *telos*; the paper clip is not the final product as there is no final product. All there is is the process of making, a kind of autopoiesis. Machines are ever moving, in-flux distributions of forces and bodies. Every artist today reengineers some aspect of the machine.

Machines are akin to what McLuhan calls environments, the very structures of behavior and sense making that saturate, architect, and coerce our experience. There is no *outside* the machine. There are only new machines, add-ons, new directions of flows, new ways to hedge and direct forces, new instructions, hacks of code. The goal is not to get outside as there is no outside (pace Derrida's *il n'y a pas de hors-texte* but also Merleau-Ponty's *flesh* and Nietzsche's *life*); the practice is to re-engineer the workings from within the churning of the machine.

As a way to understand what I mean by machine, let's consider hunger. Clearly, our bodies are little machines that take in, process, and distribute food.

Now pan back and hunger becomes a force that flows in, from, and through our bodies and is directed by a combination of factors that work in ever-shifting terms of conjunction – knowledge (kale is good for you), aesthetics (being skinny is rewarded), industry (the subsidizing of corn), economics (organic costs more), and biology (palate, gut biome, anus).

There is, then, a food-machine that can't be separated from hunger. Yes, there is some kind of force – let's call it appetite – that exceeds any machine, exceeds any local stipulations. But these stipulations simultaneously steer, define, hedge, transform, and produce effects of all sorts that link this food-machine to other machines – health-machines, sex-machines, war-machines.

The will to image is an appetite – it is a force that is taken up, interrupted, hedged, and directed in different ways at different times by different peoples. There is not one image-machine just as there is not one food-machine. Consider two different image-machines working today – graphic design and fine art. The finances, institutions, means of production, criteria of assessment, terms of success, histories, and libidinal intensity all vary in significant ways. And within each of these machines there are different flows at work.

The rise of digital technology and network culture has created new conditions of image-machines – the technology, of course, but the significance and role of the image has changed dramatically in the process. The ubiquity of image production, sharing, and consumption have forced machines that were once more or less discrete – personal memories, advertisements, and fine art – into a shared arena where the terms of their interexchange has approached near chaos, a schizo image-machine in which art, ads, communication, technology, and identity are so intimately meshed.

Take the Facebook feed: it is a movie made of personal moments shared by others and recorded and distributed as the product. Image, identity, and commodity are one and the same. As the editors of Hito Steyerl's *The Wretched of the Screen* write in the preface,

"Abandoning the safety and certainty provided by centralized optics fast-forwards us to the present, where a condition of groundlessness begins to describe a moment when politics and representation, exploitation and affect, twist around each other in unforeseen ways, bursting apart at their seams, coming back together, and bursting apart again."

There is no pre-defined artist, medium, and viewer; in this post-media image-machine, these elements collide and blur at near-infinite speed.

So is there still art? In a world in which everything is image, what distinguishes the art image from an Instagram post, surveillance camera footage, a billboard, a website, a painting in a museum, a doodle on the street? Post-media and post-relational aesthetics don't rely on institutions or provenance to justify or define art. An Instagram photo of little Lola's first day of fifth grade, a billboard for some ridiculous app, a bumper sticker, a painting

in the Louvre: all or none may be art. This is where we find Lafia's work – in the schizo world of the image where private and public, doodle and art, past and present, advertising and identity are always already intertwined. Warhol's Factory understood this. If most images we see follow the prescribed terms of bourgeois propriety, art is the introduction of the novel hack, a redirection of the flows of technology, expectation, desire, perception, commodity.

In analog times, the terms of an image-machine were more clearly stipulated – you could see, and everyone knew, how images came to be, what they signified, what value they contained. But in an age of the ubiquitous, always-on camera, the terms of the image-machine have proliferated in every direction. There has not only been an explosion of different image-machines; the ways they link with each other and other machines – capital-machines, desire-machines – have exploded, as well.

Consider something as seemingly simple as posting a picture on Instagram. That act, which happens millions of times every day, is one moment within an elaborate set of conditions, levers, causes, effects, and flows – in a word, an image-machine. What even counts as something to post in such a venue? Why do you post that image and not the other one? Why is it ok to post pictures of your baby? Why is it ok to post a picture of a late night Mission District alley? Whence these criteria? Whence these desires? And whence those filters that seem to emerge from a history of image making? Of course, there are some prohibitions around nipples and nudity. But those proscriptions aside, we can begin to glimpse the apparatus that has one post this or that image, the unwritten and pervasive rules that emerge among users that nudge, and are nudged, by the ways images are monetized and how they circulate within a social and sexual economy.

For some, especially those of a certain generation, it would never occur to them to post images, whereas for youth, *of course* they post pictures of themselves mugging this way and that, usually with an ambivalence that wavers between self-deprecation and self-celebration – a kind of image-karaoke, playing celebrity with a sense of the goof. Which is all to say, creating images for social media is a learned behavior constitutive of a certain image-machine that hedges and takes up from libidinal, social, financial, and technologic economies. Just look at how people position themselves for an image – and then how they inflect it with filters and comments. And then what happens to that image with comments, likes, reposts, hashtags; we can't separate an image from its social and informational indexing. They are literally constitutive of the image. That one image is the site of a variety of psycho-sexual-economic forces, what Deleuze and Guattari call an assemblage. The image can no longer be separated from its indexing.

In *Tumblr Room*, Lafia takes images from the eponymous social platform – along with its indexing of likes and notes – blows them up, and frames them. There is something Duchampian about this gesture as it asks us to consider: is it, in fact, art? And there seems to be a hint of Richard Prince here, a kind of

rephotography. But Lafia is up to something different. “The image repertoire,” he writes, “can be seen today not as the image alone, isolated, but as a social currency that forms collectives and shapes desire and identity. In the milieu of social media, visual imagery is attended by annotations and exchanges. They are the currency of networks and social relations that form around them. In the tendrils of the network images of fashion, celebrity, pornography, anime are circulated to express a great many feelings of desire, abjection, fear, loathing, joy and a great many networks and social relations formed.”

What radically distinguishes Lafia’s *Tumblr Room* from Prince’s own Instagram portraits, is that Lafia is not just putting the apparatus in a frame for us to see. This is not a commentary on social media. Nor are they portraits. Lafia takes up these Tumblr posts as a painter approaches the canvas – as so much affective material. Which is to say, the distribution and circulation of images on Tumblr becomes, for Lafia, the very material of his work. It’s not rephotography or recontextualization (although, technically, it is also those things). These Tumblr posts are to Lafia what apples and paint are for Cézanne: affective thingness part of the natural world (the images, like Cézanne’s paintings, become part of that natural world).

For Lafia, photography is no longer a practice of artist, camera, object. Today, the photographic image cannot be separated from its indexing, its circulation, its participation in the social and libidinal economies. We no longer separate image from views and likes; those hearts and thumbs up are constitutive of the image. Tumblr and its ilk are the channels not just of image sharing but of identity creation – and the affective resonance that forms in its wake.

Today, we don’t need art to *explore* or *understand* social relations. We need art to *(re)construct* social relations. All images are relational, whether they like it not. Indeed, post-Foucault, we understand that everything – babies, identities, books, rocks, serums, apps, images, monies, art – is always already enmeshed in a variety of relations that are constitutive of the object produced.

The question, then, is not whether a work of art is relational. The question is what relations it forges – and what we want from those relations. As Claire Bishop suggests, what Bourriaud calls relational aesthetics is a certain definition of relations – usually open-ended, participatory works, pieces that smack of “democracy” in which no term is privileged. But all images situate the viewer, if viewer is the right word, in some relation to the work, to herself, to others. One could argue that the open-ended participatory works of, say, Tiravanija are more dictatorial than a painting, demanding the viewer participate in order for the art to even be activated. Looking at a painting on a wall, a viewer can come and go. In fact, I’m tempted to say that the painting is more generous. But perhaps that’s Bourriaud’s own political bent: democracy, after all, is quite demanding – by definition, it demands participation. *Eat my curry! Be part of the event!*

Anyway, Foucault gives us the useful figure of “discourse” – those set of things we can and can’t say about something. Discourse, Foucault argues, doesn’t just delimit identities and utterances: it *produces* them. Discourse defines

what is “in the true” and what isn’t – and how institutions such as medicine and the law punish and reward these different utterances. When Duchamp suggested a urinal be in an art exhibit, he was purposefully running into art’s regime of truth – what is “in the true” of art.

Machines supersede discourse. A machine is made of all sorts of levers, pulleys, and contraptions that are both visible and invisible, a moving distribution of intersecting flows and forces (and always overflowing, bleeding). Like discourse, a machine produces identities and things, including images. It produces limits of what is true and what isn’t. But it does so much more. While discourse accounts for utterances and their institutional prowess, machines are material – they include the means of production, the technology and gadgets along with the conceptual apparatus, the affective economy, financial and semiotic modes of valuation, diverse histories.

And while in Louis Althusser’s language, a machine *hails* you – it says, “Hey, art” and then we know what’s art – a machine is not in and of itself the ideological state apparatus. Machines, while situating subjects and their relations, supersede ideology and the state. The ideological state apparatus, as Althusser would have it, is one element within a machine; it often puts machines to work for its own end, tweaking the machine to serve its purposes. But the reverse is true, as well: a machine puts the state apparatus to work (modern American capitalism, for instance). A critic can reduce any machine to the ideology it serves but there will always be excess, a bleed of forces and contraptions at work – cosmic, libidinal, affective, institutional.

A machine, then, supersedes Foucault’s discourse, Marx’s means of production, and Althusser’s ideological state apparatus. It is closer to what Bataille calls the *general economy*, the flow of bodies and forces that include the sun, plants, oceans, wind, desires, buildings, cloth, animals, eggs, emotions, words, faces. But whereas Bataille’s general economy is totalizing and general, Guattari’s machines are always material and specific.

All image making is part of a machine – from painting, cinema, sculpture, photography, and performance to all-pervasive brand images to everyday smart phone snaps. They all take place within machines that include technologies of creation, dissemination, and viewing; different economic markets; particular and ever-shifting aesthetic criteria; different semiotic economies that emerge through class, geography, age, gender, and history.

These machines overlap and inevitably intersect, taking up the other’s mechanisms – consider how Warhol, Richard Prince, Banksy, Barry McGee, and Lichtenstein use the mechanisms of the image-machine of graphic design for use in the art image-machine, although they each do so differently.

From one perspective, all art today is post-media, operating on the terms of the image-machine, all re-engineering image flow. Post-media is a *condition*, not a *practice*. So when we see Richter paint the blur we expect from photography, he is fiddling with the art image-machine – redirecting the flow of photography into the flow of paint. When we see Matthew Ritchie’s paintings wrestle the

complexity of information, we see new kinds of images, new relationships between image, information, and representation, new postures of the painter, new castings of the canvas. Post-media is a way to make sense of art today.

V. Engineering the Image-Machine

To see how image-machines operate, witness the transformation of Lafia's recent work as it moved from being strewn around his brownstone in *In What Language to Come* to being framed in a gallery for *Making Sense*. In this shift, we see the workings of the machine, how conceptual, economic, and libidinal economies comingle with the technologies of image making. Together, they are an art image-machine – the very medium of Lafia's work.

In What Language to Come was staged in the artist's Park Slope brownstone where he lives with his wife and two teen children. It's not unusual to view artists' work in their home. I've done plenty of studio visits over the years and more often than not, I'm in the artist's bedroom or laundry room – a reality of the economy in general, the art economy in particular, and the housing market. These facts are not irrelevant. They are, to varying degrees of intensity, constitutive of the art event and certainly of the art image-machine.

Viewing art in an artist's home or at a high-end gallery enjoys the same configuration of perception. In both cases, the space is a container laid out to maximize the viewing of images. This basic architecture of walls, people, and images rarely changes. Of course, the ambience is quite different – the sound of people milling, the food and drink served, the expectations of viewers, the relationship each viewer has to other viewers.

But *In What Language to Come* proffered a different image-machine at work. The art was not displayed to be viewed. That is to say, art in a studio or gallery is usually arranged to facilitate seeing, one image after another along a wall or floor, the lights arranged so we can peruse the images in all their glory. The image is the thing, a fetishized commodity. The space of the gallery mimics the frame, stipulating the limits of a work, giving it clear form we can physically and conceptually hold. It is more or less neutral, trying to get out of the way of the viewer's view.

In Lafia's home, however, the art was intimately intertwined with its environment, *occupying* – not displayed in – a vast living room that runs the length of the house. Textiles of various textures and colors all arranged, sewn, and cut in a variety of manner were everywhere, at once purposeful and haphazard, hanging from clothes lines strung at different angles; from windows; draped over couches, objects, paintings, chairs, knick knacks; and, if you could peek through the windows, lying over bushes.

People mingled, talked, drank much as they would at any art opening. But here there was no possibility of gathering in front of a piece to admire

or discuss it. There were no placards to read, no titles to ponder, no list of materials. This scene did not privilege viewing singular pieces hung and lit just so to maximize the viewer's view. Something else was going on.

This show reorganized the very architecture of the image experience, recasting the relationships and dynamics between and among these images, between these images and the space around them as well as space in general, these images and viewers, between these images and the history of images, between these images and light, between these images and the everyday objects of life, between these images and our senses, between these images and their creation and dissemination, recasting their participation in economic flows, in media coverage, in the affective and practical experience of living.

This work, like all of Lafia's work, does not just present images: it presents new architectures of the image experience. Artists are of course applauded for forging new technique or content. Heroically dripping paint over a canvas forces us to reassess, and recast, the role of chance as it displaces the artist as master and the eye as the artist's dominant sense. By sitting stoically on stage while audience members cut her dress, Yoko Ono re-architects the relationship between viewer, artist, and art. When she splayed a car through an atrium with whimsical abandon, Sarah Sze created a sculpture for outer space, free of fixed orientation, untethering viewers from our place on the ground. When Paul McCarthy puts a sculpture of Santa Claus holding an enormous butt plug in Rotterdam, he shifts the assumed sanctimony of statues, introducing humor into the experience of art.

When we enter a museum or gallery, or even when we hang a piece in our homes, we assume that we are subjects while the art is object, something to be seen. In fact, we take it so for granted that it sounds absurd to even say. The entire art economy – the art world of museums and galleries, of hooks and fishing line – performs this subject-object dynamic.

But Lafia's show proffers art that operates with a different relationship to vision, light, and the viewing body. The experience is not one of the eye taking in an image – a subject taking in an object – but of an affective body being draped in a certain ambience of light and material. The viewer is not subject and seeing is not the active verb. This art *drapes* us. It doesn't contain itself to the eye; it flows all around. Its folds and pleats seem to make it sculptural. But sculpture tends to reenact the architecture of painting: it is something to be seen. Lafia's work is of a different order than sculpture *qua* visual monument. This work is haptic as sight and touch are entwined and, at times, interchangeable. In any case, to see this art in this way is not to view it but to be draped in it.

Neither viewer nor art is master. The viewer can't just pass by this piece in order to see the next. And the art does not demand you see this one this way. The art is everywhere, inflecting the light, space, experience, almost as a co-visitor looking at you as much as you're looking at it. The experience breaks down the subject-object dynamic, taking place in the middle voice, between subject and object while offering neither subject nor object. Gilles Deleuze

might call it a bloc of becoming. And the great French phenomenologist, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, might call this a chiasm, an intertwining in which seer and seen live in a common material – what Merleau-Ponty calls the flesh – the two swapping places at near infinite speed.

Light, in this work, places a different role than it does at a museum. Here, light does not illuminate the image, allowing us to see more clearly. On the contrary, light shifts the image itself – and vice-versa. And yet it's not light art *à la* James Turrell in which the material facilitates an experience of seeing. For Turrell, the object is light that he hangs just so like a painting. Lafia's work does the opposite: it doesn't present light but insistently presents materials that metabolize light. If for Turrell, material serves light, for Lafia, light serves material.

An effect of this perceptive and physical architecture is that there is no clarity as to what constitutes *an* image. This is not an experience of discrete experiences, each in its frame or room. These works bleed, essentially. They can pick up and go elsewhere and find themselves comported in an absolutely new way – what was once on a clothesline may now be over a window or bush, covering, filtering, and making new sense of itself and the world around it. This work is not a series of works. Nor does any one piece have a definitive way to display itself.

Meanwhile, as this is a living space where signs of everyday life abound, it's not even always clear what's art and what isn't. That coat hung over the chair? Those rolls of paper in the corner? That old painting against the wall? As in his *Permutations*, the line between art and everyday objects blurs: it's all potentially art. Which calls to mind Nietzsche on the Greco-Romans for whom, Nietzsche argues, everyday objects were art as much as they were a utility. Indeed, for most of history and most of the world, art participated in the everyday and the sacred – in both cases, art lived a very different life that it does in Chelsea, not to mention on the walls of our homes.

In What Language to Come is looking for a new language to articulate this re-engineering of the art image-machine. This machine doesn't make discrete objects; it doesn't ask to be viewed; it mingles indiscriminately and happily with everyday objects. There is really no composition to critique. There's no real object to buy (as both the artist and gallerist recoil in horror!). It takes up many of the mechanisms we know – installations, performance, fashion – but deploys them according to new rules, new mechanisms, new modes of operation from its terms of creation, dissemination, and economic participation to its semiotic significance, affective distribution, and very thingness.

So when the curators of the iGAP Gallery at Grand Army Plaza on Prospect Park in Brooklyn agreed to show this work, I wondered how they'd display it. I imagined the gallery's vast glass walls lined with textures and fabrics, the space not just inhabited but ravaged by this work.

But this gallery is interesting in that it occupies, and moves through, a residential building. Only the residence is not the artist's; it's occupied by owners and paying tenants, many of them with kids. And it's curated as a

gallery that is, lest we forget, a seller of art. Both factors – residents with kids and objects to sell – call for a certain discretion. The fact that these two factors align in their intention is not a coincidence: both are bourgeois institutions.

The gallery had the odd task of turning this bleeding drape into discrete objects, works that could be hung alone, titled, and sold as it turned Lafia's work into "art" – into an institutional commodity, framed and poised for consumption. At the iGAP gallery, the fabric pieces were just that – pieces, with titles and placards announcing their provenance, plugging the work into a machine of flows of expectation and commodity.

Architecture of perception and sensate distribution, the role and play of light, viewer expectations, the way a work is framed and hedged, the way it enters financial transactions: in the two shows of the "same" work, we witness two very different image-machines at work – and two different art experiences.

When Lafia first started showing his textile work, many people, including Lafia, thought it was a move in a different direction, away from the screen, from the computational, from film. And no doubt, from the perspective of image making, Lafia is no doubt getting his hands dirtier. But from the perspective of his so-called oeuvre and the post-media condition, I don't see these works as a divergence at all. On the contrary, they mark a condensation of his work, a thorough reworking of the art image-machine from within the material of the machine itself.

VI. The Event Before You

And then there's this book you hold in your gaze right now, a book that rewires the image-machine. It is itself an algorithm that (re)distributes images and their sense. To move through it is to experience the way of the image in the post-media era. To cite a film of Lafia's, this book operates as a confession of the image, as confessions of images, as a kind of cry, scream, whisper, manifesto of the way of the image in today's techno-social imaging infrastructure.

When you flip through it, you can't distinguish between document and art, between so-called found images, rephotography, and what we like to think of as "original" work. That's because, in the post-media era, there is no fundamental difference. This is not to say all images are art. On the contrary, most images are not art as they recapitulate the dominant image-machine or what Deleuze and Guattari call a *major language*. Art is the event of rewiring the machine, hacking the algorithm, rewriting the code from within the code. Or, rather, from one perspective it is itself code, a set of instructions à la Brian Eno's *Oblique Strategies*.

In some sense, this book is a documentary recording the dynamics of the image-machine. But in a post-media world, recording is productive, forging new ways of assembling the image and its sense. The recording of the event

is an event. Explanation is performance. Explication is a put on. Display is creation. This book is a (re)distributive event, alternately and simultaneously performing gallery, work, apparatus, and code.

Lafia is tricky to write about. He jams the major or familiar mechanisms of the art-machine. He doesn't have a clear style or signature that we can see. I can't say that Lafia's work explores questions of identity or the network, even if it does both. I can't just refer to his gentle, meandering line or bold brush strokes as he may or may not have one or the other but, in any case, they don't carry over to his other works.

And now here we are in the introduction to an artist's book where it is presumably my job to do what most artists do: frame the work. Make it discrete. Make it *something*, a commodity that is able to circulate in different economies – social, financial, aesthetic. Make it something we can understand as this or that. This is what gallery owners, critics, and collectors demand: What's your shtick?

So I will say that Lafia is, in many ways, a traditional artist in that he has one medium he's stuck to over his long practice. That medium, however, is not a material or concept but a machine: he is constantly re-engineering the image-machine itself, re-architecting the very mechanisms, levers, concepts, economies, and positions within the event we call art. This book is of and for the post-media era where art books are no longer surveys recording work: they are events themselves recasting, rewiring, rewriting the very terms of art.

Introduction: **Art** **as** **Event**

The world is a work of art that gives birth to itself.

(Nietzsche)

*an event irreducible to signification and indeed to any
discursive account given of it
art is more than just an object to be read.
expressions, signatures
a coexistence between the material and the sensation
artists are presenters of affects, the inventors and creators
of affects
a chaosmos, a composed chaos – neither foreseen nor
preconceived.*

*the work of art as self-expressive movements of the sensible.
“the strange temporality of the event, understood as a point
of indeterminacy, a point of potentiality before bifurcation,
before signification and action. This point operates on and at
the very cusp between the virtual and the actual.”*

*“an art practice, as well as having a certain cohesiveness,
also needs to be able to incorporate points of collapse.”*

*art practice as simply being involved in the actualisation of
some of this potential that surrounds us here and now.*

*an object of sense that in itself involves the short-
circuiting of sorts of our cognitive and conceptual capacities*

*we can think about two different kinds of contemporary art
practice with Deleuze: the production of actual artworks or
simply of composed things in the world, but also the practice of
a life and of treating one's “life as a work of art”*

**simonsullivan*

The event is that which has yet to come. It is not known before it has arrived. It may have been anticipated in a certain projection, a certain prescription, in an envelope of possibility, yet its arrival is new, new enough. Art is the setting up of the event to come, while at the same time, in that setting up, an openness to the unknown, and so, it is the reading of that which comes, as a personal and particular event, and its setting up that may happen as such, or happen entirely not as such, that is the heightened pleasure of the event of art.

Art as an event that frames and figures, that gives form and rhythm, that becomes as such neither the world as is nor the world we know (or don't)—it is the event of surprised recognition. *Ah, I see. I can see that, I can see how one could see that, yes I hear, I see, ah I want to touch that, it's so palpable. Wow, how did we get here?*

Certain objects, certain gestures, certain situations come alive and come to have meaning in a most particular way in the guise of art. This guise of art, this “world of art,” as real as it is imaginary, I consider as a set of practices and conventions, perhaps more so *permissions*. Permissions and perceptions and events. These permissions constitute a realm, held together by a sociality that collectively suspends disbelief, to entertain and behold the possible, often in embodied and material ways. To suspend disbelief is to believe; this is why you have believers in front of works of art, those that are convinced or seduced, and those that say, *I am not convinced, I don't believe*, meaning I don't see it, or it doesn't do anything for me, in short, I am not moved, not convinced. This seeing or making visible, making material, is in many ways the conceit of art, both for the maker and the viewer. Its trick, its beautiful illusion, its seduction is in appearance, and it is to make things appear, or make them appear as other than what they are, or simply to give presence to an appearance, which I will call the event of art. It has possessed not only its author or creator, but its reader and audience as well.

Today, the event is the product of art. The very conjuring of it, bringing it forward. How the event is made material and just what constitutes the material event and just what art ‘events’ is the subject of this book.

I have wanted to do a book on my practice of art (which has been as much about the event of art) to see if I could give some shape, to conjure in words the things conjured in art, to describe the permission it gave me, the framework it afforded me, the sense of its unboundedness, its rules and operations, that are always permeable, but always there or possibly there. That is the most exciting part of art, and that is its invention and the creation of the circumstances of its event to come.

I did not set out, from an early age, to be an artist. It was more over time its realm, its suggestive operating theatre, its sets of procedures that seduced me. Procedures that are there and not there. Its permission and demand to uncover and undo, to make something one's own, to demand a singularity, a humbling, a cooperation, a going with and against at the same time. Art demands one to stop and listen, but also to stand or sit and deliver, that one fall apart, one disappear, one remove his or herself while being present to that removal. There is nothing one cannot do artistically or artfully, be it a chef, a soccer player, a surgeon, a barista, but, for this project, I am going to make a go at circumscribing the domain of art, even though I will argue that it is a way of going, a way of apprehension, of being towards and in the world. The eventfulness of art is always a material relation, be it with words, space, bodies, sound, paint, histories, computation, resin, rubber, rabbit shit, the public, the moving image—every possible kind of material. It is these materials in space, in time. It is these things in relation to the artist and to their histories, to public

knowledge and understanding or invisibility that come to have shape and figure, as an event to make something seen or sensed or apprehended.

The first seeing or apprehension comes from the artist. The artist must set up a very intense personal conversation within herself, among the many things swimming about them, things they have seen, read and heard, things tasted, languages spoken, cultural predispositions, and, in all this, they begin directing themselves in certain directions, only to be lost and confounded, or turned in a very different direction, as they search and seek out a very unknown thing that they want to make appear. Other times, things are perfectly clear, all in an instant, but in the doing something else happens—because, between what one thinks and what one manifests, is this resistance, material facts, substances, contingencies, contexts, serendipity, something happens, things happen. Art is always a kind of hazard, and a willingness or not to accept what happens. This, I think, is very different than architecture, or being a pastry chef, or surgery, pursuits that require an exactness; art is something else.

To start, one has to claim art for oneself, to bring it close to oneself, to, as I say, conjure it, converse with it, converse with other works of art, with the society of art, with life. One has to create a place for oneself in the conversation, even if you are not in the conversation or peripheral to the conversation, the conversation going on at the Venice Biennial, at documenta, or the Setouchi Triennial to Shenzhen or Basel. The world of art, the contemporary world of art is a global conversation, and like the cinema or literature or philosophy, there are those that dominate the conversation. These are the giants in the public's perceptions in schools and the media, coming in and out of favor, in and out of the conversation, commanding the conversation held in the portfolios of leading museums and powerful collectors and dealers. But, as my gallerist recently wrote me, it's often the artist who gets the most out of art, world-renowned or not. It's this event of art, through the practice of it, that this book is about, about certain pleasures and defeats, a certain and uncertain beingness.

2

All art starts with a kind of strategy, a way towards something, a way in and about something, an imagining of something, something sensual or material, something conceptual. The desire may be to create a certain affect—think of Gericault's painting, *The Raft of the Medusa*, how each figure is composed and arranged not unlike a sweeping Kubrick film or Jeff Koons's Play-Doh sculpture, or Mike Kelley's videos; they are each very purposively constructed. Now think of a Gutai action painting of Kazuo Shiraga, or an Yves Klein body paint performance, or Tino Seghal, verbal dance work, or Marina Abramović audience participatory work. These works of instruction or rules set up chance events, and the structure of the event is to put on the event, to capture and

catalyze an event. One of the reasons artists work in series is that they generate an instruction set, a rule set, a set of possibilities; of materials, themes, colors, concerns, narratives, a whole concatenation of things and then through this abstract diagram they start to proliferate these differentiations, bringing works forth in this possibility space they have created for themselves.

One movement is towards exactness, making material do exactly what the program wants and what the artist demands. The other is to follow the material, asking just what is this material or situation and which way does it go. It's within this spectrum that much art happens.

It can be said that the artist has long ago abandoned the work of producing images for representation. More precisely, the work is an image of thought, the object, the image of this thought, this thought of a procedure, a process, a set of instructions.

The artist sets about creating processes, procedures, formats, and signs. In Nicolas Bourriaud's sense, art is about producing a relationship with the world, with objects, with time, with actions—this relationship to the world and its signs produces the world and looks at how the world is produced. It is an image of becoming. Art is that which becomes and becomes. Becoming, in Deleuze's sense, is the notion of the world not as a place but always as a becoming place and a becoming being, the world always in front of us, always in motion, always a present.

Becoming, things as process—is indeed an inherent property of algorithmic and interactive structures. But it's much more than that, older than the now ubiquitous idea of computing and universal machine.

For the most part, when people think of art, they think it deals with intuition, inspiration, uniqueness. The public doesn't often associate the term instructions with art, maybe style or signature, but instructions they more than likely associate with engineering.

Instructions can be understood as an engine between an outcome and an intention. Instructions are the ideas that set forth the art.

Once forms or formats are known, they can in a sense be built by instructions because we know the form, we know the rules, and as we know the rules in a sense we know the instructions to build the form. This can be deceptive because once we know the form or the format often times the work arrives dead or leaden. That's why artists re-invent forms, to make them contemporary, to make them reflect the moment and sometimes, of course, as old forms are overturned, entirely new ones emerge. Art is a multiplicity of forms in the making.

3

In college I saw a great many paintings projected large in my *American Art since 1900* class. The luminosity of the images, slides, similar to those my father

projected, along with films, in our home as a child, absolutely entranced me. Paul ... our teacher stood in the dark and spoke melodiously over the works, this distribution of various intensities of hues and lights.

At fifteen, I built a light box, a rectangular box about 2.5 feet tall with colored light behind a paper skin. The changing light put a certain spell over me. This, with music and looking out at the water from our home in Miami, gave me a delicate sense of vibration and atmosphere. We lived on the bay, set off by a large lawn, and the sensation and vibration of the waves rolling in and the colored lights stretching and bending with the waves and their soundings had a magnetic pull.

The influence of those real and hallucinatory fluctuations, lightwaves, and sound waves, the water's seascape and atmosphere above is something, though seemingly so different, I found and experienced again in the desert. Though the sparse desert landscape hardly moves, it has an extraordinary expanse, a kind of rolling surface that in time gives forth a great delicacy of differentiation which has a very different sense of time. The hard light of the desert moves thought its terrain, making its plants, its flora and fauna, seem underwater, underwater without the water.

Places and their atmospheres, heat, wet heat, very dry heat, sweltering heat, thinking now of enormous rain drops and rainfalls in Shenzhen, Tobago, Hanoi, a wet, wet, wet, not Thailand, not monsoon wet, the tidal pools and movements of the inland bays of Cape Cod, Point Reyes, their gravity, tides, whirlpools, fog.

Each of these places have fluctuations and atmospheres, states of varying intensities and qualities, not just of light, but touch, humidity, dryness, crispness, hard, cold, they permeate our skin, put us under the weather, yes, the atmosphere, the planet's places, each places us in unique tactility and makes one's body take on, co-habit its condition.

Place conditions us, language conditions us, our culture and its conversations, at war or peace, particular weather, surroundings, all of these things inhabit us, surround us, take hold of us.

When I was sixteen, my eighth-grade classmate Henry Penagos invited me to stay with him in his home for the summer in Bucaramanga, Colombia. I arrived late at night in Caracas, and awoke to an enormous mountain outside my window. I had never quite seen a mountain, certainly not through a window, not from such a high rise building, a towering mountain so perfectly framed outside my window. Years later, I would traverse high up in the Andes. That summer was the profound realization that my life, my American life, was simply one way of going about things. Henry's friends' sense of the U. S. of A. and the many colonial and invasive things they were doing in terms of oil and geopolitics were entirely new to me. I saw myself and my culture at a distance from myself. I knew I had been programmed, as everyone was. But I also felt deeply that there was so much more than that very surface level. Something I had experienced was me but not me. After that summer I could never see

things simply and absolutely as they were, as given, but, more so, that things were contingent and emit all kinds of sensations.

Each of us has a unique tactile and sensate register, a cultural shaping—and the atmosphere of wherever we find ourselves.

4

Just as the camera has a viewfinder which frames a world, art is framed by various discourses and spaces. In fact, the gallery or institution or exhibition space frames the work of art, gives objects and events the status and legitimacy of art. Just as Duchamp's readymade confronts the sanctioned space of art, its authority whether or not to confer art to such an object, to any thing placed in its space, so does the virtual frame of art, the imaginary that one sets up as art's limit.

But authoritative sanctioning cannot alone make an event, for as I said above you may not be convinced. For Duchamp, it was not the object of the snow shovel that was art (perhaps its title, *In Advance of the Broken Arm*, was), no, it was the select authority of art that would have to ask itself if his store-bought, mass-produced shovel was or could be admitted to the status of art. It was putting on this question that humored him. How can we take that thing which is the least personal thing possible, the urinal, his famous first readymade, and consider or admit it as art. It was easy enough, soon enough, to see the prodigious Picasso and anything he touched as art, but the ordinary coat rack found on the street, that was something entirely different. But it was not the bottle rack or urinal that Duchamp was putting on as an object of art, but rather the jury that embodied the authority, the social institution of the Armory Show, the gatekeepers of art, they and future audiences became the work. What could be would be everything and anything that could be conferred the status of art.

The event of art, one of its pleasures for sure, which was also its disturbances, was, well, what's art—where are its limits? Who says no, and who says yes? Ultimately, you do. You need to be convinced. But believe it or not, that's unsettling for many people, many people in the art world, art collectors, curators, galleries are themselves at times not sure, not convinced or just don't know. And so as not to be caught on the side unconvinced, only when the tide of insiders is tipping towards or away conviction, a series of permissions must be put in place. This is why we have ever more layers and authoritative sanctioning that vet artists, including certain schools, certain residencies, certain collections. These both shape and sanction the art we get to see and experience, and it protects everyone inside so that everything is more or less within the shape of this sanctioned dialogue.

In the complexes of the event of art, which are many, is a standing up to it,

looking at it, looking at you, not just the work, but at the language around it, the money invested in it, the work itself, if indeed there can be a work itself.

I write this because I want to set up this idea of art as not simply objects and things but as discourses of power, social and academic, market power, and (as an artist) those discourses, those societies and the 'snow shovel' that puts them on, that turns them out are forever in dialogue.

5

The contemporary artist is a facilitator of events, is facile with materials and discourses, accidents and happenstance; these themselves are events. Where is that limit, beyond which something becomes other, when something becomes an event? That place where unanticipated, once concealed, now offered, now appearing, that just before was unfamiliar, unknown, is now exposed, to us, uncomfortable and unsure, just what has appeared? How do we suspend disbelief or unknowing and open to what reveals or announces itself as this new thing, this something else, see and sense it, apprehend it? Ah, I see. Yes. Oh, yes. How do we let ourselves, permit ourselves (not that any permission has been denied, or need be granted by anyone but me, you, each of us) to be receptive to the event, to recognize our surprise, and how do we set up, create the instructions, the circumstances, the impetus, the possibility of creating, bringing forth this surprise? This, in short, is working towards the event of art, its pleasures and possibilities, its hazard.

The event of art is a series of operations, transformations, dissemblings, bringing forth substances and appearances. It is always a possibility to come. It comes by setting up, situating its reception, against, within, outside a certain kind of limit. These limits are cultural, technological, domain expertise, institutional, family, fear, training, too much, too little, each an impasse, each an opening.

Take painting, no longer tied to architecture or a building due to the portability of canvas that lets works travel. Eventually painting can be done outdoors, plein air painting, which changes what painters paint. Consider the time horizon of painting with acrylic rather than oil. Take the VCR and the remote control, both allowing for simultaneous and intermittent viewing or freeze-framing. There would be no work of Douglas Gordon without this instrument, the video cassette recorder which is no longer used. Take computation or music synthesis or any number of new fabrication techniques; each changes what we can see and what we can know. David Hockney brought forward a theory of art and optics: around 1430, centuries before anyone suspected it, artists began secretly using optical devices, lenses, the concave mirror and the camera obscura to help them make realistic-looking paintings. The camera lucida brought us lens drawing, not recording what the eye sees, but what optics see. Video brought us a new seeing of real time, live time,

body-lived time. Artists used video much differently than television. Same with social networks, Facebook brings forward one attitude and Chatroulette another. The list goes on and on, and we'll explore it more and more throughout the book, this use, misuse, innovative use of all kinds of tools, events in themselves, bringing forth new realities, new social relations and ever new material culture.

6

Art is always conceptual, of and about material; it is the materialization of an event of appearance.

How to make something appear in the midst of its disappearance; how to make ourselves appear to ourselves so that we see ourselves seeing, sensing ourselves as something emergent, contingent, vulnerable, variable, going with the world, a world that is not simply seen through the screen, commanded by data sets, algorithms and semantic programs, a world that is increasingly being folded into a virtual world, a world making an ersatz double of itself, a world that has already disappeared? That world disappeared in the modern, what Heidegger speaks to us of as being taken out of the world, out of nature and its rhythms. With electric light, satellite transmission, global instantaneity, denser and denser cities, ubiquitous recording, insane military hardware, the world becomes profane, and we are unmoored.

As our senses and behavior are captured, observed and modeled, harvested click by click, movement by movement, neuron by neuron, under the pervasive watch and contouring of artificial intelligence, we are made other, domesticated and neutralized.

Artists work toward finding new ways to inflect language, to shape experience, to discover new forms, to sound new sounds. Inventors, scientists, designers, musicians do the same. They alter familiar patterns, forge new ones, and see whole new worlds that others haven't.

But things just don't happen out of the blue. They happen in context, in the context of cultural everydayness, from political, ideological needs, desires, relationships, the force and flux of things we don't even think about. We just do things because that's the way we do them. How else could we do them? We just get on with the doing. The given.

Artists excel at taking the given, the banal and everyday, which we soon enough no longer see, and make that which holds up the given, seen or seen again. This is their stock and trade, as the expression goes.

And this goes very deep and very far.

As we transfer authority, our subjectivity and well-being to the market and data, to our sensors and screens, and the analytics of such information, the dominant values of our culture increasingly privilege sight over touch, information over empathy, the cognitive over the sensate, the image over the event.

In the age of the Anthropocene, the planet has become a work of human design, its peoples and habitat something to be managed, monitored, and continually observed, all in hopes of creating a frictionless and reasoned world. But quite the opposite has happened, “the wholly enlightened earth is radiant with triumphant calamity” says Heidegger, all in the name of market and moral authority.

7

For Nietzsche “only as an aesthetic product can the world be justified to all eternity.”

For Nietzsche, the world is first and foremost aesthetic: it is a perceptual experience. A phenomenon, not a noumenon. A perceptual experience, something that is perceived, not thought. Of course, our perception is geographic and cultural – the Eskimo is perceptually more attuned to the varieties of snow than the pigmy. The perception of snow for the Eskimo gives her 28 words for it. Perception is perspectival, yes. The delectation of perception as “good” and “beautiful,” of course, the refinement of the senses, yes.

Nietzsche’s claim is to shift the question of the justification of the world from a moral argument — or a conceptual, “reasonable” argument — to an aesthetic, phenomenological one. The artist’s project—to come to the senses again—without moral argument—without judgement. F.N.’s argument is that art comes first — not truth, not survival, not necessity. In *Genealogy*, he argues that man moved from instinct to promise — from immediacy to one who was continuous over time — via art: the artists beat themselves into submission, their bodies a canvas, in order to make something interesting — *not* something moral or good.

The practice of art is an excavation of subjectivity, history, memory, in the space now designated art; it is a space to write a new figuration of the social. As Godard said of cinema, we might say of history, that it is alone—away from us, too close to us, and we are its ghost, never certain of the facts, only the affect of a time past. My desire with art is to extend us, me, you and bring us back to ourselves, the world we live in, and our bearing on how it is we make the world, ourselves and art.

8

Directions, strategies and instructions to create works often require the removal of the intentionality of the artist. From John Cage’s prepared piano scores to William Burroughs’s word and image cut ups to Gerhard Richter’s

scrapping or smear paintings to Sophie Calle's chambermaid hotel forays, each author sets up a constraining operation, a kind of limit set that generates material. Think of the Richter paintings and the random optical jumps in the smears, or Calle's findings of varied personal possessions in hotel rooms; the artist on the one hand opens herself up to the immediacy of chance, while at the same time with this immediacy makes certain decisions, certain selections, such as which articles to photograph, when to stop the painting, which juxtapositions of word/image click.

The composing machine, the apparatus of capture, the proliferating engine (whatever we want to call it) sets up, as do algorithms, limits and constraints, which allows the apparatus to get on with itself. In this way, the author or artist serves the machine and sets aside herself. The recipe works the artist, works the material, and the artist needs to step aside, alongside, outside, go along and go with, this eventful happening.

The artist allows the recipe to produce, all the while setting aside judgment, up until a certain point. Richter does say, *now I am finished, it is done*, but all along the way unknown things happen. His approach is to allow them to come forth, to appear, to be erased, to appear again, and on and on the dance goes. Standing aside lets things happen that otherwise we may judge too harshly or abruptly. And that judgement can get in the way of letting the material, or the event of the material, or instructions bring forth sounds and paintings, shapes and ideas, images and happenings.

The artist writes a score, an instruction set, that gives them a way in, a way to go, a going. The production of repeatable strategies may be the most arduous and elusive thing the artist must do, after which it's just doing.

Is the art the going, or is it the trophy brought back by the hunt, or the setting up of the strategies? Perhaps it is all of it and more.

9

Art is not all about intentions and the will (in fact, not much so at all). It is as much about accidents, chance, but a very specific chance. The chance of a form forming, chance as a procedure, more than happenstance. Chance, an intention that puts aside determination or willfulness. Chance as in a roll of the dice does not abolish chance that lets things happen, sees things happen, waits and awaits the happening, rides it.

art is the medium of the day.

it is a media.

yes, art, the whole of it, its instruments and discourses, its markets and material, it is a media.

i want to see art in the event of itself.

*i want to make art
as an activity,
as work,
as a practice,
as a way to live,
as something to do.
something most ordinary
and everyday,
it's work.
its pleasures are its pleasure, no better, no worse, than others.
to each her poison.*



9.5

The studio, then, is a set of procedures and operations, a set of recipes and instructions, some made on the go, not yet formalized, and others tried and true. One of them being this background, this and that context.



9.8

The work of art, then, is a kind of forgery. A kind of beautiful deception. Perhaps more in the realm of material objects, let's say, rather than novels or music or architecture. The artwork has so many ways into the con or forgery, its very existence ordained and predicated on its context. Think of Richard Prince's painted jokes, a great joke on a joke.

The artwork is a seduction, it can never be simply a fact like a nice photograph that says *here I am, aren't I tasteful and beautiful, I have a good eye*. It must be against itself, mock itself, stand for and at the same time against itself. It operates simultaneously as put-down and put-up of itself. It is a particular rhetoric. Unlike design or advertising, it is not a communication; it is an expression.

10

Art, then, is an event of finding form and rhythm, and, as such, existence. It is that which frames and gives form to the becoming of my sense, my sensations, my play, my touch, my history (any history), it is my becoming with the world, with and through thoughts and things. Art is a mode of going as much as a thing. Maybe it's the way things go, the way we make them go and go with them, the way we give our sensations form and rhythm.

What follows, then, is a series of goings, where art itself is a medium, a language and practice, a discourse and materiality, simultaneously already at the same time something that hasn't happened yet, something to come.

10.5

The material of art can be a site, a context, a cultural history, inside the pages of a book, an archive, any space designated as such, even your imagination—can art be made, happen and disappear, dissipate like the clouds in the sky? Can art be an event that is not recorded? Why this insistence on the material work of art? If art is expression and not communication, if it is an intensivity, a turning up or down, a moving sidewise, if it is the movement of sense, moving, then that's that. It's complete. As such, whenever, wherever.

We often give and ask of art extraordinary things, like the movement of peoples, the great sway of moving nations, overturning the real, revolution, political becoming, an increased humanity; why don't we just ask that of life? Art seems to designate something inside life, *of* life, something we know and don't know, something already and something yet to be. We certainly ask a lot of art. Perhaps, in asking less, there would be more art.

11

The artist asks what the self might be, and how various notions of the self afford and open possibilities.

14

In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari proffer three modes of artist production that correspond, more or less, to three historical eras: the classical, the romantic, and the modern (see “Of the Refrain”). The classical artist, they claim, is he who lends form to the formless, who forges the very world itself, Yahweh amidst the clay, artist as god. The romantic artist, on the other hand, speaks the forces of the earth: The mountains! The ocean! The undulations of this earthly world!

The modern artist, meanwhile, harnesses the forces of the cosmos. He stands amidst the fray of the cosmic winds, amidst the great swirls of galaxies just taking shape, at the limit of sense, at that precarious juncture of order and chaos. And rather than extending his will over this great teeming, he proffers a gesture or two, hedging here and there, allowing these forces to express themselves within these or those stipulations. The modern artist remains at the periphery of this production, lending shape but not shaping, allowing a form to become, not forging the form.





1

Art
as a
Recording,
but
What
Kind?

Only as an aesthetic product can the world be justified to all eternity.

(Nietzsche)

There are three threads that move through these works. First, a material investigation of the regimes of the network as they transform the notion of the self and subjectification, which is a putting into relief of the technological apparatuses that atomize our bodies, cities, representations and self-representations. Second, a self-presenting of the now, being now, being present, by foregrounding the artist's body and the self, a self of appetites and limits, a situational reader and being in the world, one that makes marks, gestures, movements, allusions and performances. Third, a tactile working of books, fabrics, plants, stones, plastics, paper—things of immediate touch, things of volume, weight, decay, light, and folds.

Art as performative recording

an enactment, a depiction, a form, a format, a fabrication, an undoing, a becoming, a self-questioning, an interrogation, a critique, a reading of recording, the recording that makes art, the recording that remembers art. The recording in itself of no particular aesthetic value, or such is the claim, but to record is to be present to the event of art, to give form.

The real seems less real than the as-like-real that we create with our technology. Rather we live in the "new now": recording, watching and archiving live footage, texting, emailing, and taking pictures of everything. we record in order to know and then forget ourselves. (lior)

When I first started taking photographs, I wanted to take interesting photographs, I wanted to photograph interesting things, I wanted to make ordinary things interesting by photographing them in interesting ways. I wanted to seek out interesting things that were photographic, I wanted the camera to do more than simply take a picture, more than record what was in front of me—I was puzzled by photographs, until I realized I could photograph photography and that everything was being photographed, and that I could make photographs of the seeing of pictures, of visualization.

The camera is an interface onto the world. It both records what's there and what's not there, in its recording it creates what was not seen but is then conferred to it by virtue of photography. Photography, contrary to what most people may believe, does not record the world, it makes it other and strange. But it is a something. Of course this is not what we generally think of when

it comes to pictures. We think the photograph (at least certain photographs) and the world the same thing, and we think the photograph evidentiary of the world, a piece of it, something simply sampled in time from the real. Regardless of what a photograph shows us, it becomes a thing in this world, a material, even if it is code, passing about on the network, it is a thing.

If the camera records and invents things, what about words and spoken language and all that disappears with it? Imagine a world before recordings, before the transmission of recordings. Imagine a world where only a particular person or special place conferred and embodied things. This is the question of aura raised by Walter Benjamin in “Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction”: the event in the oral tradition is experienced once, and if repeated, done so only through in-place and in-person in ritual. For the most part, art is encountered through recordings, and without recording, there is no transferable art. What then of something immaterial like oral language? And what does it mean to give form and rhythm to a thing such that it is doesn’t disappear.

While waiting in a line at a benefit party for the Dia Foundation, I struck up a conversation with an editor from the magazine *In Style*. Soon we got to talking about art and I told her of my most recent piece, a webcam fixed on an igloo in Antarctica. We would watch the igloo melt in real time from winter to summer solstice. She received the idea quite enthusiastically.

Fifteen minutes later I was around one of the tables talking with an artist when I heard someone calling my name with some urgency. The *In Style* editor brought me over to several collectors and introduced me as the artist doing the melting igloo piece. They were very intrigued by it as they were collectors of conceptual photography (making it clear how the photography they were interested in was vastly different than a Weegee). They went on to ask where they could see the piece. I was delighted by their earnestness and began to construct an elaborate tale of the path to its viewing involving virtual touring through vast tundras, secret passwords, controlled access.

The idea of the melting igloo is aesthetically pleasing: the decay somehow pristine, exquisite and of course foreboding of the continual warming of our planet.

The fabrication of the idea and its dissemination at this event includes the aesthetic of the idea but also the joy of making an idea, of telling a story, and of making something appear and have substance that’s not there.

The performative story supersedes the reality of the igloo: its fabulation is the work of art and it’s a work that could only really happen with this particular audience, in a context of art professionals. The urinal in the bathroom is a urinal, but within the white cube it becomes something else, or does it. At this very social evening of art something appeared and then vanished.

Art is always a possibility, if we look just to the right, or left, just above or below, or straight on, in front of us, inside ourselves. Its possibility is there. Not just by looking, but also touching and daydreaming and wordplay. But how to

capture it, materialize it, bring to it the frame of art, to the event of art, so that in its presentation it is perceived as such?

How to make this “melting igloo” a material thing, move from the realm of the sayable to the visible and the tactile?

How to make it transmittable and iterable?

Wherein is the work of art in the sense that it can be?

Would it look something like this? The oral becomes written. The written becomes object. And what kind of object?

The initial role of photography in conceptual art was to document actions or phenomena. . . . The view that underlies much early photography by conceptual artists was that the camera was an “opinion-less copying device.”

MELTING IGLOO



Waiting in the bathroom line at a benefit party for the DIA Foundation, I struck up a conversation with an editor from In Style. We were all feeling a bit frisky and soon I was telling the editor that I was involved with Net Art (I'm always unsure what to tell people I do; the answer varies as mood and circumstance demand.) I told her my most recent piece was a web cam fixed on an igloo in northern Alaska. We would watch the igloo melt in real time from winter to summer solstice. She received the idea quite enthusiastically.



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I was delighted by their earnestness and began to construct an elaborate tale of the path to its viewing involving virtual touring through vast tundras, secret passwords, controlled access.

Conceptual art's primary visual source looks to be the academic textbook, where a poorly printed photograph or diagram, accompanied by a caption, is standard fare. But the fact that this mode of address is culturally omnipresent does not make it invisible, for, as I have already pointed out, there are informational modes distinct from it that, by contrast, always render it visible again: it is only invisible in context.

(Mike Kelley)

Much of conceptual art illustrated an argument about art, giving that argument a form or format a presentation style, like one might find in a science fair on a poster board. It wasn't performing the argument in the work itself, well not entirely, but sort of. Because in itself the "work" is elsewhere and the photograph and text speak to it. The work isn't what you see in itself, but it is.

Yoko Ono, in *Grapefruit*, asks or instructs her reader to "make a painting in your head." The work is the instruction, "make a painting in your head." Anyone can do it. You just simply start painting in your head. Now the Igloo could be presented as, "stand in any public line or at a party, make up a story of an imaginary work of art of yours." Whereas *Grapefruit* is a book of instructions, activating the imagination, the *Igloo* is an action, presented as a performance, but presented precisely how. This increasingly became the thing that intrigued me. Art as an event of an operation, a displacement, a refiguration, a material operation, that remains with, is and is part of the thing presented, the thing both itself and transformed, its former and new self.

The Igloo could be presented as, "stand in any public line or at a party, make up a story of an imaginary work of art of yours."

*It would be a story
about showing her the pictures she would want to see, only
those pictures and no others. she had a very visceral reaction to
anything red. i remember when i sent her long stem crimson roses
and asked the young delivery man to dress as matador. i sent him
a manet picture of a panting copied from goya. at the door she
was overwhelmed by the sensation of color, became dizzy he told
me, she fell, flinging back on a glass table. he took her to her
white couch and cleaned the blood from her pale palpitating skin.*

It would be a story about multiple classifications.

*It would be a story not about modeling information for the
user along there preferences but about bringing about in them my
sense of the image.*

*It would be a story about two different image files (in
whatever format I'd choose), I would write a program to predict
the chance if one was the illegal copy of another. I would look
for things like cropping, rotating, making negative, or adding
trivial details that would change the image.*

It Would Be a Story

A very long title for a work of art that does not exist, or does it? Without recording, what was art? Were the magnificent cave drawings art, or ritual, or art for ritual? What was that relationship between the making of the drawings and the being with the drawings?

*Language dreaming, language, a computational sounding
dreaming as in, lost in a dream, unrecoverable, the body
possessed by words, sound before alphabets, sound before writing,
words speaking bodies, words slightly more useful, words at a
limit, slightly more attractive, to seek a form to come, sense
between bodies and language, a sign is not itself but different
from all the other signs*

I don't know how much all these language games are important because meaning is not uttered only in language—with signs.

Dreaming Alphabets, 1999

*language as an asignifying register, stutters and stammers, to
call forth—to invoke—an audience.*

performance

*for two performers. one reads and the other
enacts the letter forms of the alphabet spoken
“judged by what the sole person takes over—from inherited
language which “verses and thinks for him”—, whatever he adds by
herself is marginal. No one is capable to abandon the “mental
mass” and replace it by a new self-creation.”*

*How do words move our bodies and how do our bodies move words?
And what are the many things our bodies do outside of language.
Plants, rocks, air, the sea, atmosphere, other animals, the sky,
move as bodies, as intensivities. Words move through our bodies,
we taste them, we sound them, their sounds shape us. Our world
shapes us, has given us our shape. we live within it, along side
it, through the eons of it.*

*The things that speak besides words. The things that just are
and that we sense but can't speak.*

How to seek a form to come.

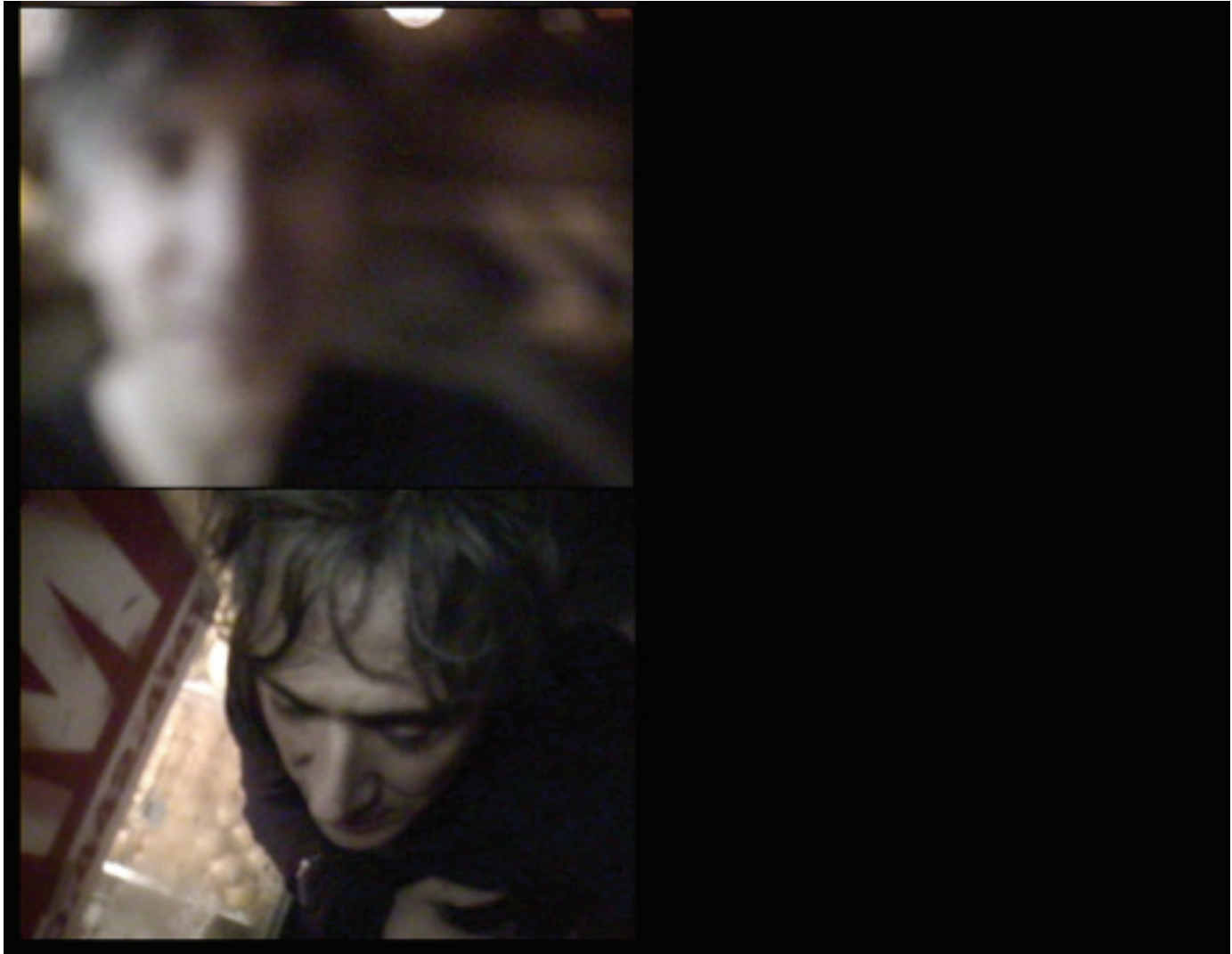
If the expressive power of language is only one register of our experiences there is everywhere a plentitude of expressivity to be found.

The work of art is always in search of expressivity, material and form.

The artist gathers up the many materials of the world and works within and with the material sense at its limit, at the limit of how such material is thought and felt and held and beheld by the artist.



Dreaming Alphabets, Once and Only Once 1999 performance, San Francisco



The images above tell us, show us, that a work, is. Their form represented in an image and words, ah, but the sounds you are not hearing.

In *The Sounding of My Alphabet*, I record every letterform, myself saying them in various places, sample them and play them back electronically in pitches and variations my body's instrument can not. My voice captured inside the instrument, a double of me, cleaved from me is now the materiality of computation, giving the "samples" of my new voice, new body. I live along me in recording. Recording is the double, the ghost of me, and, a thing unto itself, and for some the only thing, the real thing.

Actions are actions only if they are recorded

staging action, the real as a real stage, artist as performance, artist performing the world as art, artist seeing the world as becoming art amidst its realpolitik, "the politics of reality," the artist never alone with art, a complicit alongsideness, mutable, global, fiscal, wherever, whatever, now, the period between 1973 and 2008, we know what comes next as things stand—more contemporary art, neo-objectivity in the face of co-option, the world not a moral argument—or a conceptual, "reasonable" argument—but an aesthetic, phenomenological one, art comes first—not truth, not survival, not necessity. Actions without uttering a single word.

Art is a staging, of action, staging of a discourse, without uttering a single word.

The studio can be as virtual as real and can also be a place from which actions are staged with and by the artist as performer.

For some time, artists have brought the studio into their art, made it part of their art, just as artists have used the frisson of the institution of art, the white cube of the gallery, of the museum, as a context and place to work against. Bruce Nauman brought his studio to the fore in an exemplary way. He, his body, his studio, working in the studio, he made present to himself through and in videos and photographs. His actions were often simple, including expelling water from his mouth "fountain," walking about, playing his violin, putting his head in a chair, all of these actions recording his presence to himself in the space of his studio.

In some sense the recording of an action, almost any action, would do, as any of them perform the artist. Nauman's work isn't, in any sense, heroic, pointing to a towering creator of genius, no. He is more like a Beckett character or Buster Keaton, ironic, distant, stupid and tiresome, and as such, in his anti-heroism, epic. Why, because the artist works, he or she toils, he or she labors and makes arts. We may have an image of the artist at a Biennale, at a celebratory dinner, or in the headlines with record breaking auction prices. But not in Nauman's world. In the confines of the studio, the artist does time, pays the price of her obsession, is as much trapped by art as having those few moments of grandeur, only to fall back again, in search of the beautiful imaginary.

The artist works, labors to make arts. We may have an image of the artist at a Biennale, at a celebratory dinner, or in the headlines with record-breaking auction prices but in the confines of the studio, the artist does time, pays the price of her obsession, is as much trapped by art as having those few moments

Cameras on my desk 2010
used to make Revolution of Everyday Life

Cameras on my desk 2010

Cameras on my desk



Body, Actions, Recording, My Double My Self, Me as a Recording

To “see” one’s self at the moment of recording in a future space of representation.

We post photographs of ourselves, almost continuously. Our lives are events to be pictured. Our past is somewhere in those recordings, no need to remember them, the recordings will be past me.

If the camera frames and produces events, the body does so prodigiously. The body, its appetite and sensations, its hunger and sleep, its taste and dreaming, blindly and beatifically sensing, flailing and soaring, carrying itself about, its being is of course, organically, inevitably, at a natural and terminal limit, and in all of this, a most complex event, part of everything and singular at the same time—what more media is there than our bodies.

If we are seduced and enthralled of our instruments, they are but outrageous extensions of ourselves, heighten prosthetics, extending our senses of sight, touch, hearing, mobility, increasing our speed, altering our metabolism.

My body as an object of sense and perception.

My body as an object map, a perceived and perceiving subject, constructing and deconstructing, and doing so much without me thinking about it.

My body, bodies, social bodies, our actions and representations, my self is complicated and made to be complicated in art, made to be seen as body art, body politic, world body, live body, living body, marked body, state body, beatific body, refuse body. Art then gives me my body, my sense, my senses a frame of being.

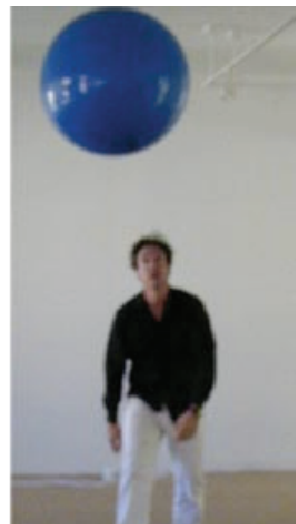
In art man enjoys himself as perfection.

So said Nietzsche, but perhaps in art man enjoys all the folly of imperfection and contingency in life. That is why the event is so pleasurable, as a moment seized, seen and made shareable or transmittable.

When you get a sense of your body, your ego, you, as a set of instructions, habits, indoctrinations, needs and wants, reflexes—then your body can become a material, you can become art, you give yourself, your body, your knowing self, the permission, the attitude and altitude of possibility, of not hanging on to something, allowing yourself not to know—which I feel starts from knowing, sensing your body, as this thing, this appetite, this fleshy boney digestive thing, this machine, this assemblage assembled.

BALLOON

There is something so immensely joyous about running under a bouncing ball. It is that delight that I wish to convey not so much in the image but in the recording of the action. When the ball is airborne, it is a balloon, it has transposed its properties, amphibian-like. Running underneath it, I engage the ball in its process of transposition, at its internal limits, enjoying myself at the juncture at which this balloon turned ball (and back) enjoys itself.



I run under a balloon that was a moment before a ball. The camera puts on the event. It is me and the ball becoming balloon staged in photography.

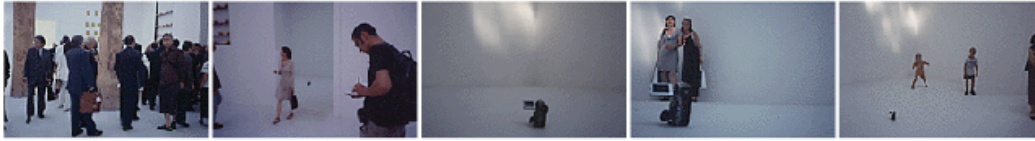
ACTIONS

The following pieces comprise an ongoing series of actions or events representing the exploration of physical and representational spaces.



French Pavillon Biennale Mediterranean NYC Broodthaers Igloo Actions Photo, Recording

I collaborate with this man, a carpenter, to measure himself, the measure of a man.



FRENCH PAVILLION BIENNALE

A performance, a strategic and pleasurable intervention in cultural activity. At the Venice biennale99, a small dv camera was placed on the floor of one of the rooms of the French Pavillion pointing to a corner wall with patterned light coming from a skylight. I stood in the corner for a minute or so playing to the camera and no sooner did a passerby do the same. Very soon those who came into the room looked on in the viewfinder of the camera and then went on to pose for the camera in the corner.

VIDEO ▶

At the French Pavilion at the 2000 Biennale, there is an empty room. I place a small video camera on the floor in the center of the room and turn it on. Soon, those that enter the room play and position themselves to the camera. The audience becomes participant becomes media. Years later I am in the Shenzhen Sculpture Biennale, “We Have Never Participated.” I look up the 2017 French pavilion and it is a recording studio set up for the audience to audition.

Giving presence to the body—embodied and spatially situated. Becoming with the world.

Over time I ask myself how can we come to know ourselves knowing. By seeing the instruments that figure us.

Maybe it is only more recording that can overcome the world recorded. If the camera once was witness to the world it now enacts it.

To be of the world, I become a recording. After all, are not instructions a making present, the act of making present, a cascading forth, an event.



A series of performance works called *En Garde*. *En Garde*, as you may know, is a term used in fencing to warn your opponent to be on guard and to assume the position preparatory to a fencing match about to ensue. To humor my small child, I do many of these small moments of *En Garde*. Here, eating ice cream, I lunge my small plastic spoon forward and declaim *En Garde*.



And here in the pool with the plastic floating spaghetti string.

It is humorous, silly, but infectious and immediately puts on the moment of the now.

In doing this we would put on the moment, creating another relation to our environment and ourselves. We would create an event of art.

To engage the public. Public art. Art as conversation. Art as *mise-en-scène* outside the institution of art.





Wherever I go I see a stage for an action, a chance to put on a moment of life, of reading this with that. Everything is an encounter. Everywhere is my studio. It's not the action per se, but action in action. I want to stage an event for a recording.

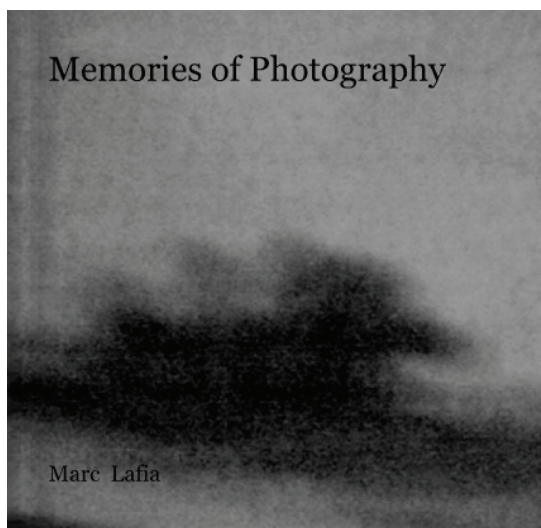
Appearance, not of an image but the coming together of *making* an image. Something there that is not there. An image of appearance. The child to come, the birth of the image, the appearance of the event to come.

2

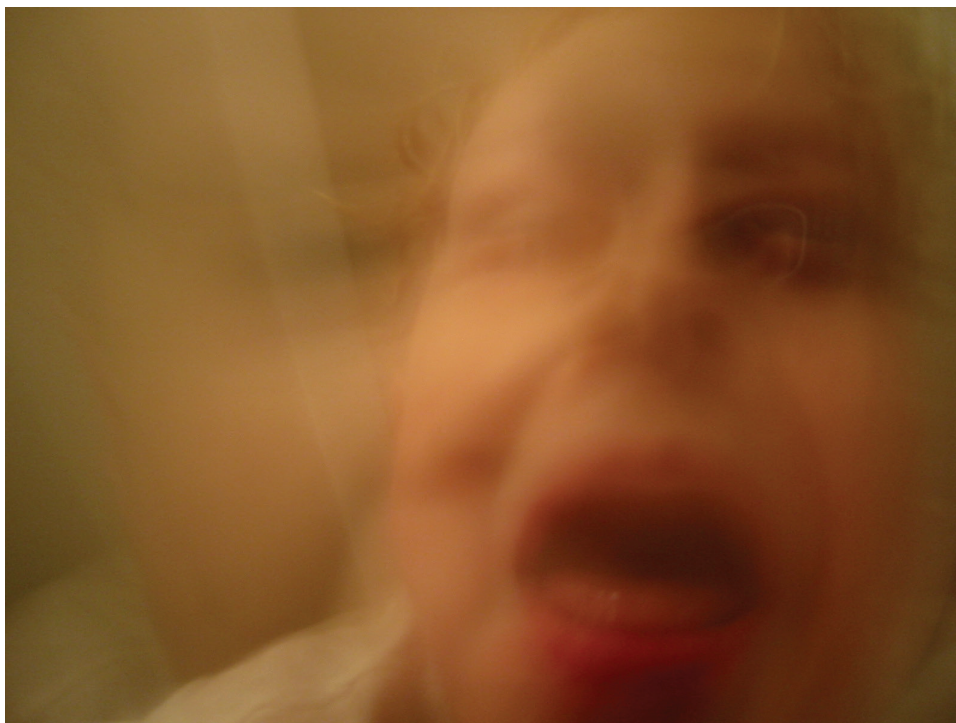
**Photography
and Cinema,
Recording
Instruments
of the Everyday,
Instruments of
Many Registers**

I am present to you in recording. No plot, no characters, very realistic.

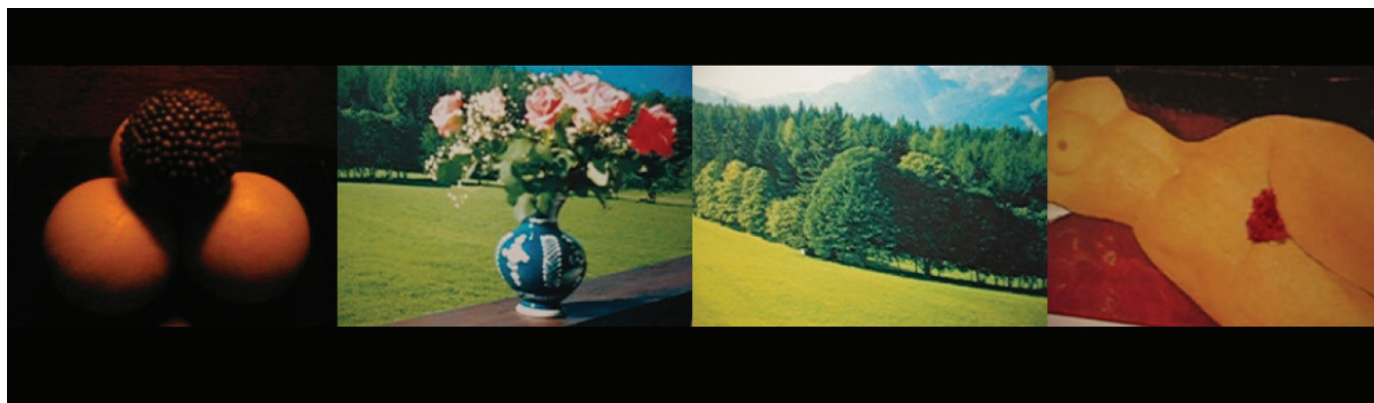
The archive, an instrument of many registers. The sense of a picture: where does it come from, how do we arrive at it? How do we see pictures?



Here in this book, an exhibit, an exhibition not held anywhere else but in this book. The book, a space, a limit.



The camera, with me, makes expressive the portrait, makes photography express more than what I can see.



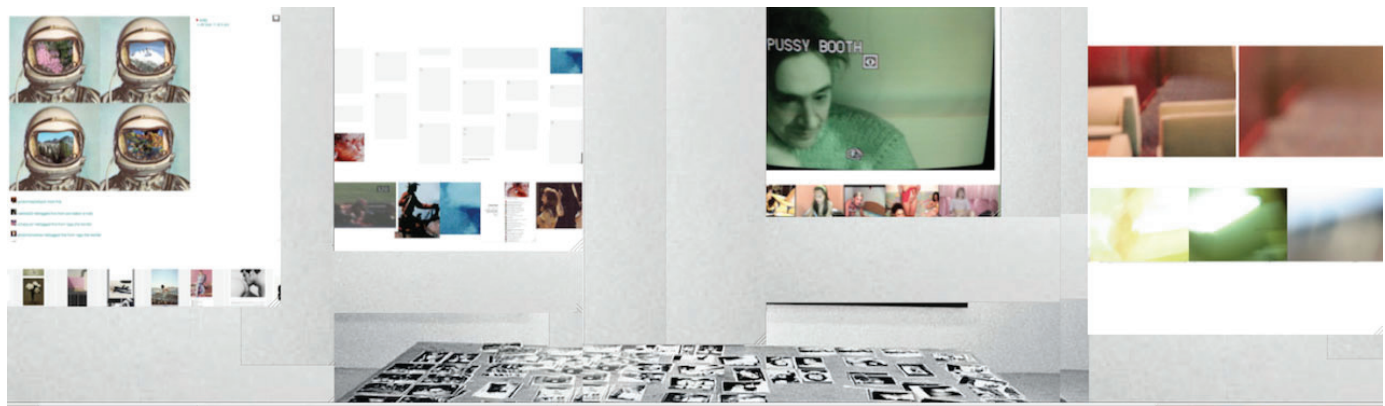
Every image in relation to another image. The image is never alone, but all images stand alone from us. They are all strange, unnatural things.





Photography atomizes the world, fractures it, separates it, gives us unnatural powers.

Photography is a way of seeing, mechanical seeing, arresting time, and as such constructs its own event, an event whose result is a photograph often taken for the thing itself. *Tree Index* maps, registers and atomizes a single tree into sections. The image sections are printed on index cards, placed in a book, a house, an architecture, for this single tree now brought together again. The photograph is an index and so presented, presents perhaps “treeness.” The work uses the index card as a way to read the tree, read photography, and to read the book.



40



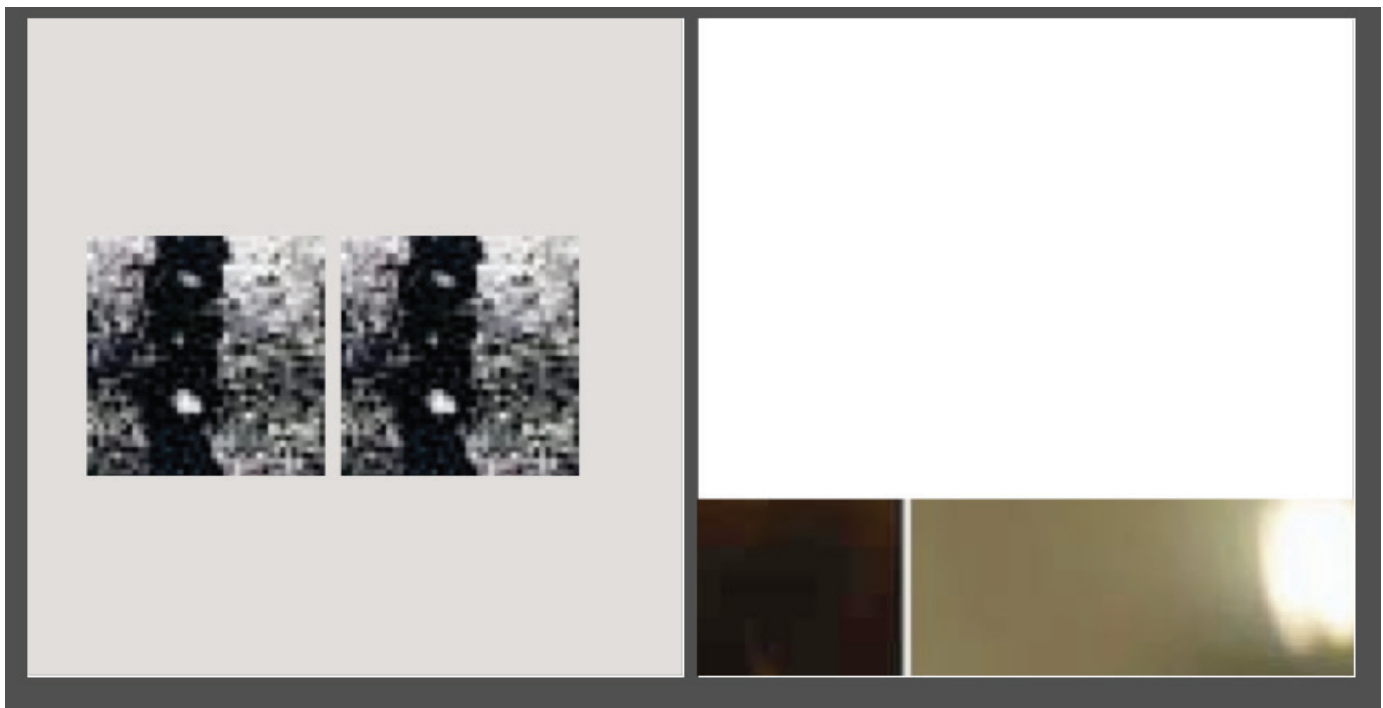
The Image of disappearance.



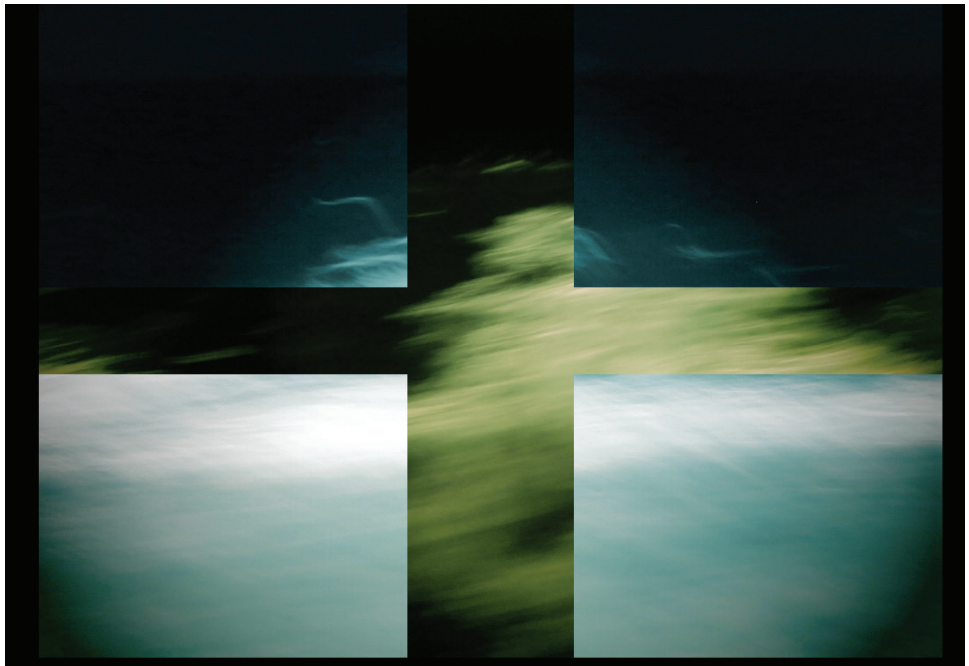
The erotics of search, of seeing at a remove. Seeing is arousing. The pleasure, the power of seeing without having to touch, to see an abstraction.



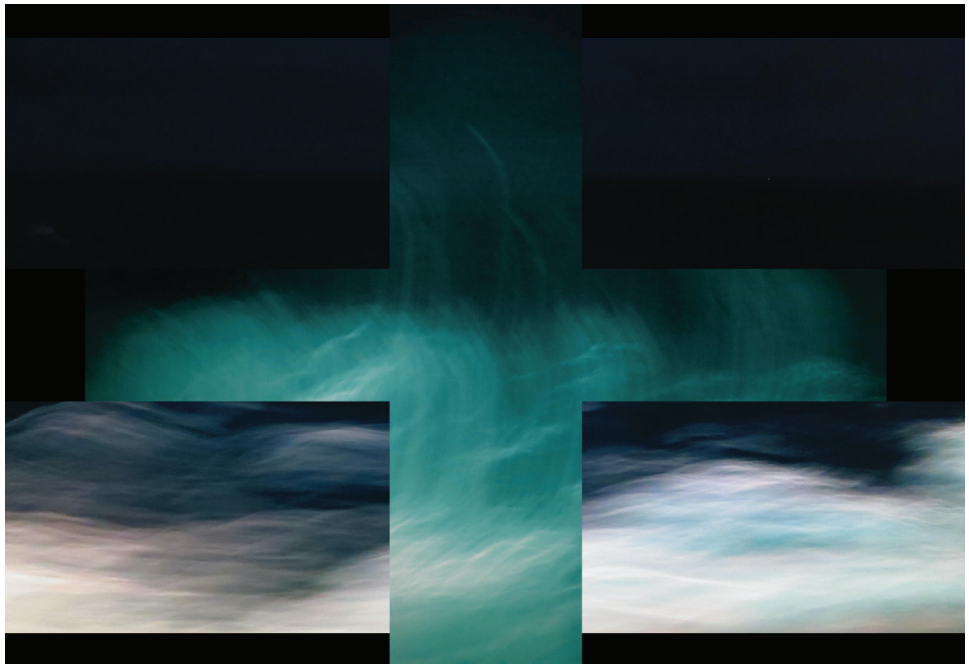
The image whose sense and import is forgotten, the image now, simply graphic, multiple.

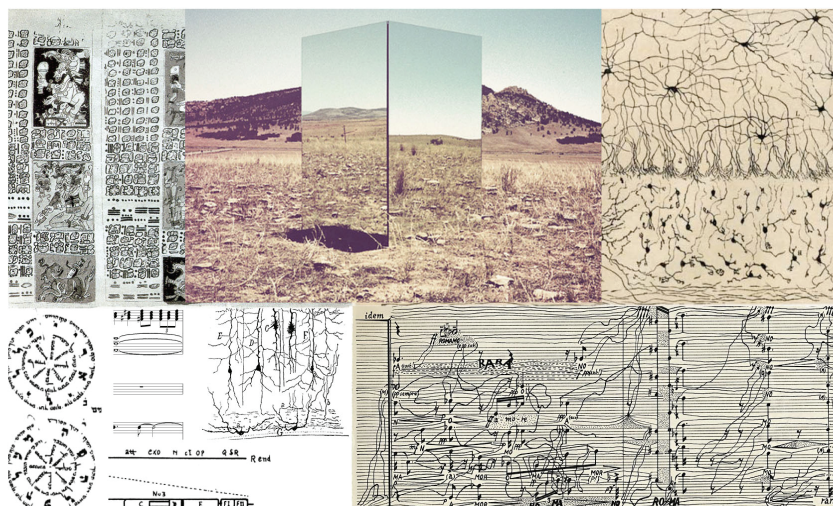


The texture of the image. No longer seeing anything. Just texture. Removed from anything the camera saw to become its own event, its own reality. There is no elsewhere to the image.



Designing with images.

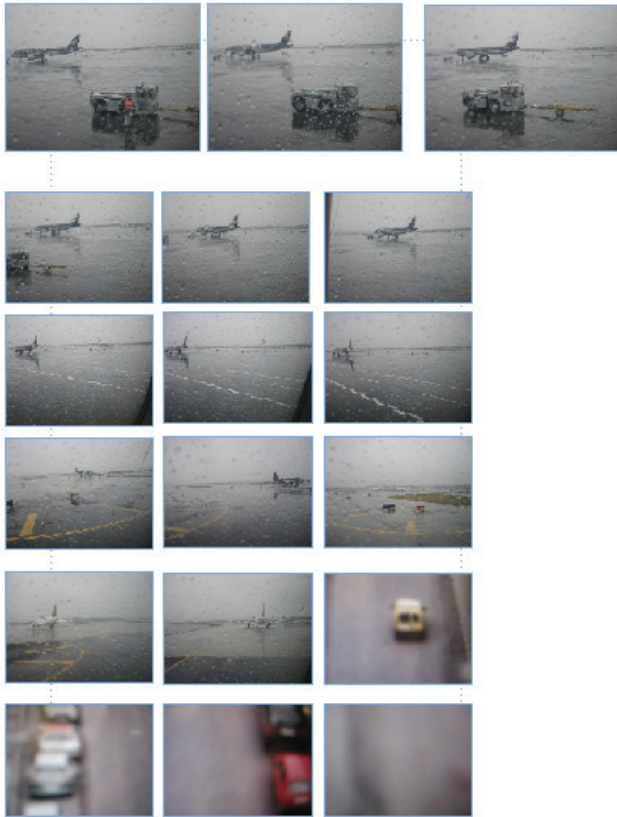




Photography as multiplicity, as map, a cartography of spaces.

In *Cartographies*, I am interested in crossing the disciplines of architecture, science, mapping, illustrated manuscripts, using glyphs, imaging, contemporary photography, and text to assemble new and fanciful maps, networks of possible utopias, new archaeologies, emergent cosmologies.

Art—the image, image making, event making—is not artifice: it is as natural as the river’s meandering, the ocean’s tumult, the tree’s emergence. Man is not extraneous to this world, an actor on a stage, a passive reactor to the cosmos. We go with the world—our musical scores, our maps and legends, our science and performances wind alongside, in and out of, trees and sky and planets and microbes. It is all happening, this great will to emergent complexity.



The image is always multiple, always becoming another image.

My Image My Self

The self staged by photography.

Long before the selfie, there was self-portraiture.

To create a fiction of one's self through recording, not a reenactment, not staging yourself exactly, as in a Cindy Sherman, and not simply putting on one's self, taking a picture of one's self, but putting on the environment, the set and the setting.

***At this moment, I am sea and sky and everything myth-
ic.*** 2012 performance



I put on wigs. 2010





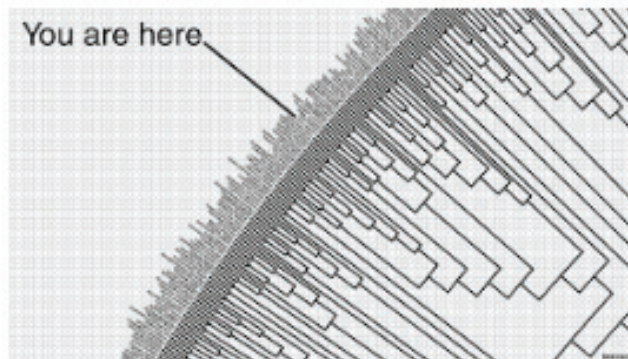








I wanted to see how photography might locate me.



And dislocate me.



I am located and dislocated only to relocate myself, to become present to myself, by reading the situation in my particularity. I am not simply there, I am creating a particular thereness in the material form of an image. But it is an image photograph, never to be a photograph proper.

IMAGE
PHOTOGRAPH

An Essay

Photography as an image, photography as the recording of an encounter, a recording of an apparatus — the aesthetic of the image is the image that reads and performs imaging.

17

The image as event. The book as messenger of the event. The book, at least for the author, as carrier of import. Later on, the book as paper, binding, object, paper, ink, volume, pages. Whatever is in that book, gone. Only the husk remains. The body lives, but the life of it dies.



Confessions of an Image, 1999

The moving picture camera makes a double of the world. I am the video world made flesh.

In *Confession of an Image*, I ask what it is to make an image, what is this realm of the image and imaging, what happens when incandescent light becomes electromagnetic light, when everything becomes seen and imaged?

Confessions is an essay film on cinema made mostly of still images and voice. I shot the film with my Sony digital tape camera and recorded the voice track with a separate cassette tape recorder. Both recordings were happening in parallel, each with a life of their own, and each reflecting the fact that cinema was as much a technological construct. In the digital and in the network environment of ubiquitous recording, narrative, beginning, middle, and end, all of this would begin to take on very new meanings and usage.

Confessions was my 'end of cinema as a medium' essay. It is a series of 21 visual essays about the image, cinema, and memory, written, filmed, and edited by myself.

The making of the world is inevitably a becoming, precisely because it is happening anew before our very eyes. It rewrites, re-records itself continuously.

The fundamental bifurcation is always this one: between machines for liberating desires and mechanisms of control over the imaginary.

(Franco Berardi, *Precarious Rhapsody: Semiocapitalism and the Pathologies of the Post-alpha Generation*)

Mechanical reproduction and cinema
made a double of the world

Movement creates the event orchestrating
a perpetual shift of appearances

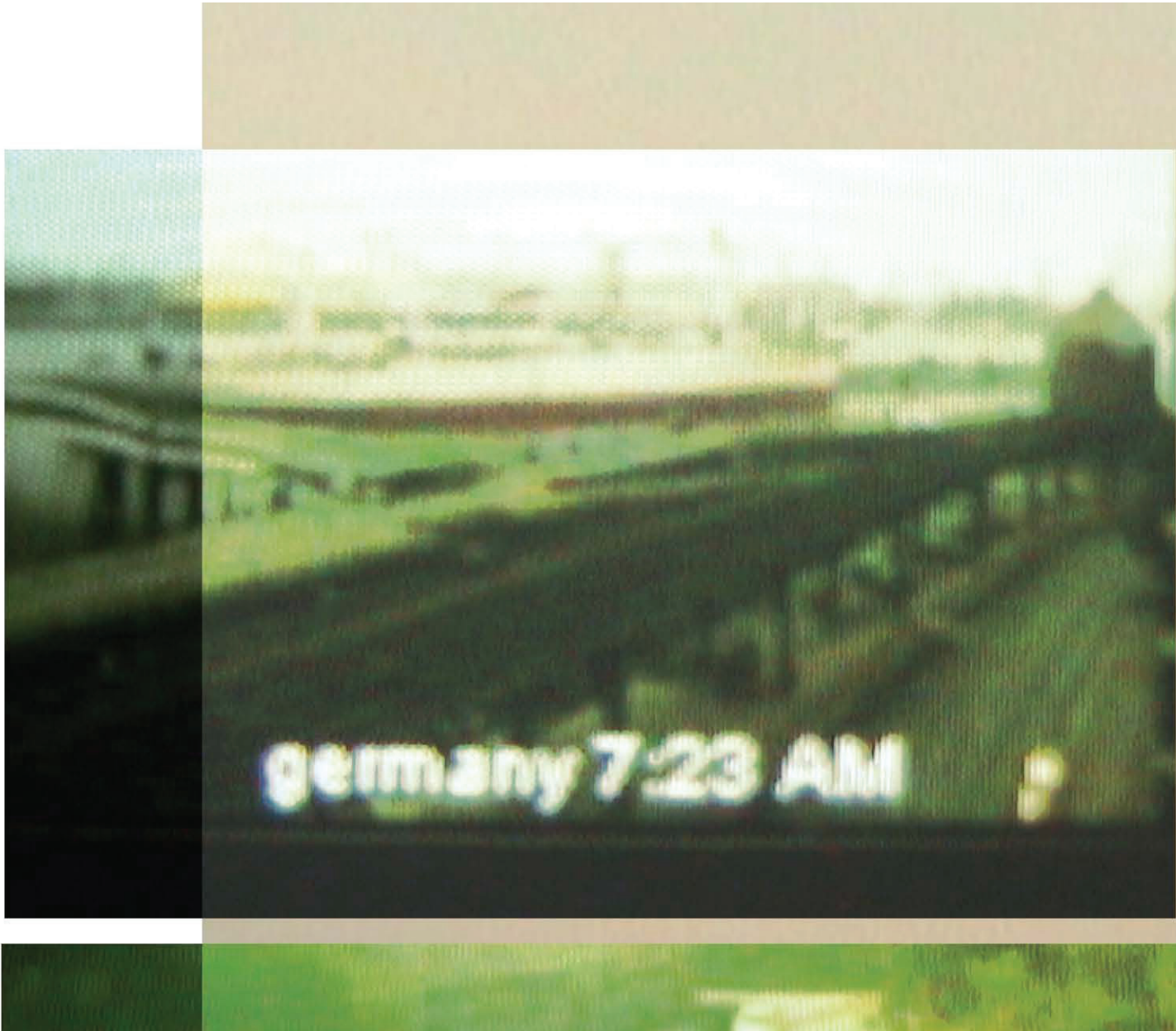
Real and unreal

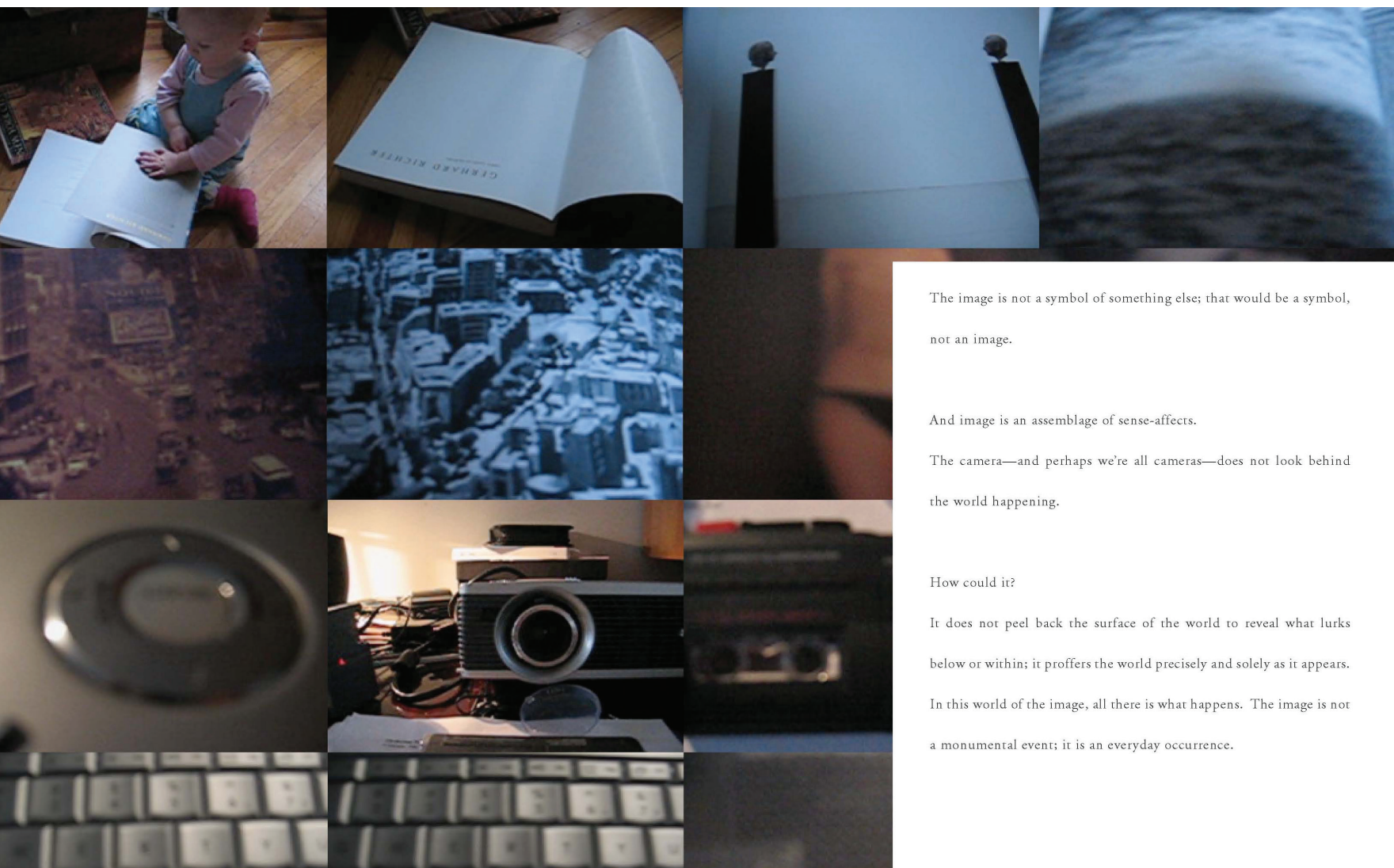
This continual shift of appearances is a
trick effect to reality

A mise-en-scene with changing sets and
disguises

With the acceleration of these effects
there is no longer a here and there

Only the confusion of near and far,
present and future





The image is not a symbol of something else; that would be a symbol,
not an image.

And image is an assemblage of sense-affects.

The camera—and perhaps we're all cameras—does not look behind
the world happening.

How could it?

It does not peel back the surface of the world to reveal what lurks
below or within; it proffers the world precisely and solely as it appears.

In this world of the image, all there is what happens. The image is not
a monumental event; it is an everyday occurrence.

our images where a celebration and awe of this terrific force

*all of this changed with cinema, with a construction of an
image projected by an artificial incandescent light*

only in darkness could we see

*the light of the world gave way to the light projected
mechanically through the celluloid of still image projected light
has been now replaced with electronic information*

information is now part of the equation of energy and matter

this is the story of this transformation

*this is the story of the disappearance of astro physical
luminosity as it becomes the pulse of electronic signal of total
vision*

our vision has been absorbed such that we can no longer see

we are blind

*we might be able to describe the world but we can not explain
it*

CONFESSIONS 1

*once the image gathers enough speed and momentum the image
becomes invisible to us*

*cinema is a machine to forget
it is a history of disappearance
cinema records this speed
this movement
and like the earth that continually moves
when it would stop we sense catastrophe
the still image haunts us
the still image is the anthesis of movement
and so it suggest a certain finality*

CONFESSIONS 9

3

The
Unbounded
Wor(l)d

Photography becomes a memory of itself, all of us making recordings all the time, nothing exceeds the screen, no peripheral vision, a perpetual now, the camera a computer, writing into the network, a network of relations, the network as an apparatus, an exponent, visible, viewable, quantifiable, always in the state of emergency, accumulating more and more data.

If the camera and the media brought us the world, the network put on the whole of it, spectacle and spectator folded into each other, consuming each other, performing for each other.

The subject of the digital is our relation to recording, to being pictured, to create a self that is pictured, and to create a viewfinder that is polyvalent and a person that we imagine is real, even a real fiction, but the network knows as an interface.

Recording now is ubiquitous, happening all the time and at many levels and scales, while typing here, using the ATM machine, blogging, Skyping, chatting, on the network live, under the surveil of cameras while shopping, walking across the street, under the instrumentation of a physician, in devices inside our bodies, our homes and cities under the sights of satellites.

Cinema was a way to image the world, to narrativize the recording event, to create an event that would allow us to see, recording now turns on us, us seeing and imaging ourselves, in this saturation of recording and those computational machines reading and recording us.

Warhol early on gets fixed at the sight of seeing through the camera; there is no need of *mise-en-scène*, no boredom of seeing, just an endless fascination, compulsion to see as recording sees, to see without feeling, just to see, an accident on the road, an electric chair, a friend, they are just recordings, it gives permission to look.

I perceived the browser onto the network immediately as a real time editing machine, a real time camera, and the role of photographer, biographer and film editor collapsed. Where once i had to arrange my own filmed footage, i was now editor, voyeur and participant to multiple simultaneous flows of information, sounds and images.

HOTLIST

MARC LAFIA

THE PLEASURE OF THE WEB lies not only in the construction of a pointed query but in the poetic serendipity that spirals from this point of departure. When colleagues see my desktop, they often comment on the sheer number of websites I tend to visit simultaneously. The documents and images at these sites represent events happening in different temporalities. An orchestration of the Web's all-at-once profusion of collision, association, chance, and obliquity, my desktop promises infinite depth, or rather, an infinitely pleated surface. Continuously recontextualizing, montage varied events, I use this Möbius information apparatus as a polyoptic prosthetic. Sometimes I seek the cranies of the globe, other times the pulse and flicker of the world's network as it surrounds and sprawls across my body. I am within the enveloping space of an always-on, reading-writing-viewing simultaneity of varied duration and temporality. All of this is to say that the Web is an open work of perpetual

Let's start with the colors, shapes, movement, and proliferating screens on *ada'web*, the Walker Art Center's online project (adaweb.walkerart.org/project/aitken). Doug Aitken and Dean Kuipers take you through a series of photos and text, narrative insinuated, the event at once imminent and immanent. Then, at FUSE98LAB (www.fuse98.com/fuse98lab/labM.htm), click on EXPERIMENTS and proceed to tables one, two, or three: Let words, images, and sound hop and skip around the screen, a microcosm or condensation of the Web. At www.combine.org/combine99/andy/idiot/01.html you're delivered a rant of narrative inspired by and borrowed from Dostoyevsky, housed in an elegant pulse of flowing text, image, and sound track. Here, film and novel blend beyond their respective genres: Is this MTV? Click-and-drag the elements of time in John Maeda's sprawling Java calendar, at www.maedastudio.com/cal1deliv/index.html—Who owns time now? Then turn to a proactive machine of chance: the Burroughs Cut-up Machine (www.bigtable.com/cutup). Put in your own text or combine it with pieces of *Naked Lunch*. At www.jodi.org/map, Joan Heemskerk and Dirk Paesmans present a sprawling green diagram of many early Net artworks and tropes of new media and online culture. And on to mila.ljudmila.org/nettime/zkp4/toc.htm, which offers a proliferation of links to Net-art critiques and manifestos.

Brian Eno's and Peter Schmidt's project *Oblique Strategies* (www.msn.fullfeed.com/~gtaylor/ObliqueStrategies/Explore.html) provides textual reminders, rarely complete, of productive ways of thinking: stratagems for living interestingly. These discrete systems of montage allow chance to insinuate itself into our reading, making serendipity constitutive of the event. At bbs2.thing.net/jam, join the GraphicJam, a séance of sorts, where you spray paint with others in real time. The only trace of the other participants is the line being drawn, ghostlike, before your eyes. Then on to Skot (www.skot.at/question.html), a diary of sound, vision, and everyday reverie, and the Universal Sleep Station (www.sleepstation.com), to look into Ana Voog's world (via "anacam"), ripe with arty art and arty nudity. Or enjoy the smiling, joyous ambience of Todd Oldham (www.toddoldham.com)—and send a postcard to a friend. And of course no Web expedition is complete without the multimedia extravaganzas at the Remedi Project (www.theremediproject.com), ever-revolving exhibitions of webby delight. □

An artist and filmmaker, Marc Lafia is a founder of artandculture.com.



Clockwise from top left, screen captures from various websites: Todd Oldham, Doug Aitken and Dean Kuipers, William Burroughs, Ana Voog. Top right: Marie José Burki, from the book/CD set *Other Rooms*, 1999.

authorship, where experience is without history, an invisible trail of travels without trace. It is a new metabolism.

With this in mind, think of the following not as a list of sites but as a kit from which to construct mobiles of images, events, and text. The sites are to be enjoyed individually as well as in combination, and are presented here in the kind of experiential montage embodied by the Web.

The properties of computation, algorithms and networks herald a new syntax of the image, information, sense, the body, time, which blur, intertwine and exceed the once distinct critical vocabularies used to discuss such fields as cinema, architecture, design, urban planning, video games, the visual arts and a variety of scientific disciplines.

The horizon of an integrated set of technologies based on a substrate that is computational and networked brings forth a new constructed imaginary, an immersive transactionable operative media of desire and restraint, of being seen and seeing, an augmented cybernetic technoscape that places individual action in the space and time of a new kind of instantaneity, a new

visuality, locatability and legibility. Contemporary art and design, marketing, television, communications, gaming, entertainment are intertwined with this complex of technology.

The stable or fixed histories of the avant-garde cinema, poetic cinema, narrative cinema, of video, image installation reconsidered, refigured in computational media, refracted and understood in the context and environment of telecommunications, telematics, the environment of design, architecture and mass media gives a radically new trajectory to the possibility of time-based or moving image works.

Such work consists of mixed temporalities, varied formats, a confluence of histories, a heteroglossy of lineages.

The image as an inscription that can be characterized by multiple historical trajectories, substrates, materials, rhythms and temporalities.

A temporality has come together to coexist globally and simultaneously to form a superimposed spatial temporality that characterizes the contemporary social. A new aesthetic operates both within and across cultures and across time and includes and predates the technology of image and distribution that we think of as the photographic or the cinematic or the moving image.

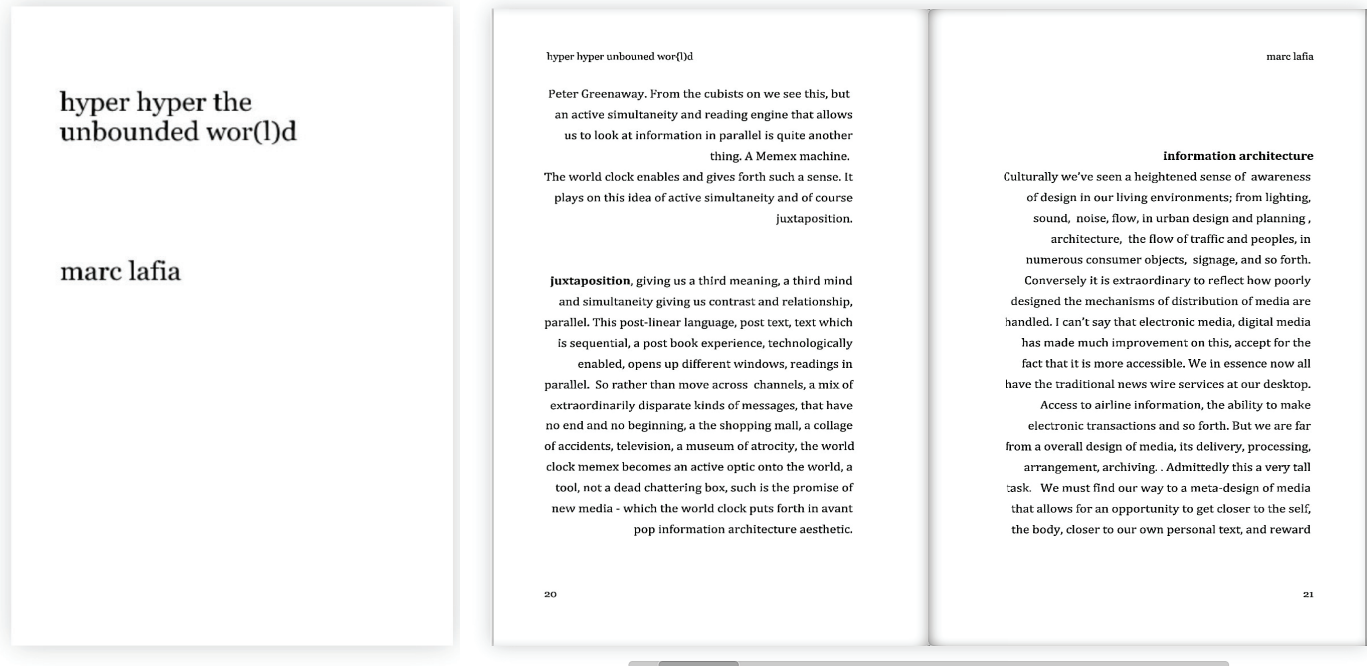
Every inscription presents the possibility of another. Every inscription traverses instructions inseparable from their works. The work's procedures give it life, give it force. Object or system results from that encounter of procedure or instructions and the event of inscription. And, of course, the context of that inscription which we will talk about later.

It was not until my mid-forties that I begin to exhibit work in the world of art with my initial work emerging in the context of net art, network art. The condition of the global network was bringing forward new processes, new metaphors and new arrangements that refigure our senses and at that moment various international museums including ZKM and The Walker Art Center and later the Whitney were interested in the digital and the network.

Hyper Hyper the Unbounded Wor(l)d, (the book) 1997

By the mid- to late-nineties, it was clear that all media would be absorbed into the world wide web. The once bounded media would become unbound. Marshal McLuhan had sensed this at time when there were only mainframe computers and written about this as a global village with the instantaneous transfer of information which, of course, started with the telegraph. But more than that, the world wide web would bring us to communication between sender and receiver.

I wrote about this in my book *Hyper Hyper the Unbounded Wor(l)d*.



But, of course, the book is bounded, a bounded infinity, but bounded.

Viralnet

The relationship between ideas

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Like Levine, Haacke did not use technology as an end in itself, but rather put it in the service of the ideas -,

Art as an information processing system, feeling that art had traversed from the object to the idea, from a material definition of art to that of a system of thought ... [t]he idea becomes a machine that makes the art." Several paragraphs later, however, he warned that, "New materials are one of the great affliction of contemporary art ... The danger is, I think, in making the physicality of the materials so important that it becomes the idea of the work (another kind of expressionism). 59

The "art" consisted of his investigation in an art context of the relationship between ideas, the vehicles by which they are expressed, and the semantic networks that enable them to have meaning.

Software Art and Writing Edward A. Shanken, Duke University

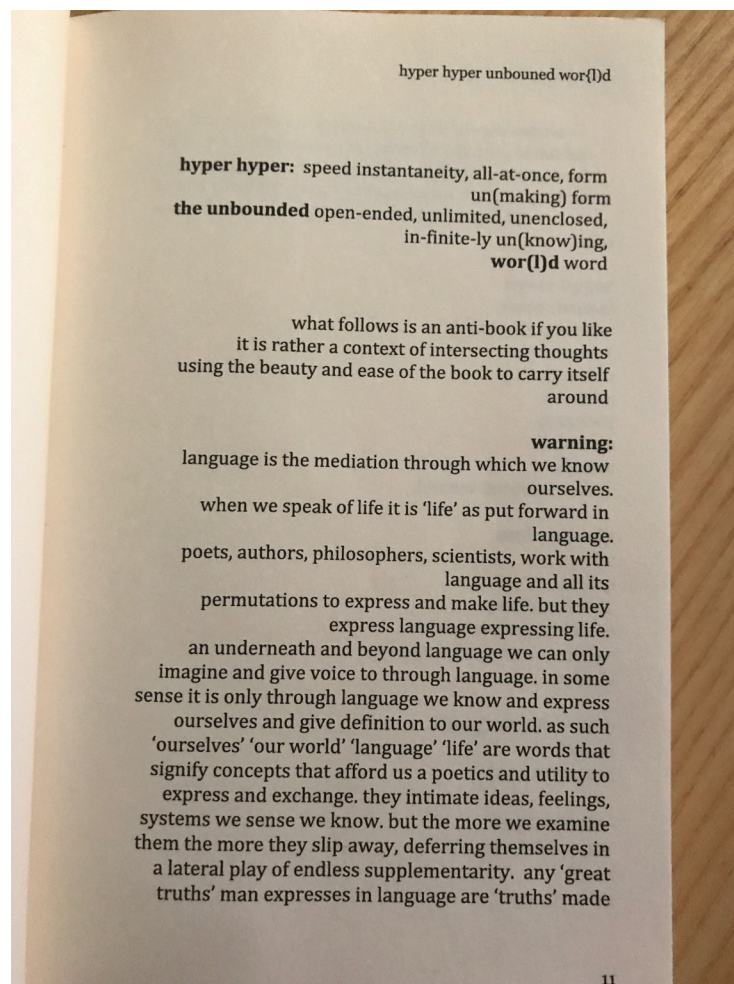
Created on January 8, 2005 13:00 by [Doug Goodwin](#) (69.17.103.70)

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Here, an entry in the book is entered into a wiki created for a project at Cal Arts. The book above fixed in order is navigated in an entirely new way.

Interestingly, the project at Cal Arts lost funding and the wiki has gone off into the ether. But, nevertheless, the wiki is very much the way we read today, laterally and associatively. I have always loved books, but from this time on saw and made them as objects.

Hyper Hyper is an inventory, a collection, a set of fragments, machines, like Duchamp's large glass that codes and uncodes . . . an open work about textual operations that in its form is a metaphor or a nonmap of a new kind of cognition that will even further evolve out of the operational and writing spaces of digital media. Writing and reading have become much more collaborative, elliptical, networked, readerly, foregrounding their spatiality, their intertextualness. This sense of the writing space is reflected and informs the numerous other arts and signifying processes. One need only look at electronica music, novelists such as Kathy Acker, the web, the installation and mixed media practices of the art world, the sense of event in architecture, the success of the end of print, the fascination of graphic design, typography as a surface, the recent Bill Viola video retrospective, such films as *The Pillow Book*, *Irma Vep*, digital imaging, all of this impacted and reacting to the unboundedness of writing. Writing has taken on an aural quality of all-at-onceness and simultaneity, becoming an imprint, interface, texture, to an empire of signs an environmental sort of a puzzle inside a novel inside a painting inside out the vast engine of signification.



Planet, World Picture Clock, 1996

(<http://vimeo.com/26328829>)

(<http://artport.whitney.org/commissions/idealine/textonly.html>)

The World Picture Clock is an engine that gives forth a portrait of the world as a place of multiplicity, simultaneity and emergence. It does not privilege a single point of view, but rather a proliferation of views. It is an interface that allows the participant to arrange the world in associative ways emphasizing duration and presence. Simultaneity, juxtaposition, the world in its all-at-once-ness, the world clock is a polyoptic viewfinder amplifying the many properties of the time-world network and the web. At once active and passive, the *World Clock* pushes the world while acting as a surfboard, a navigational interface: the metabolic function of the world.

Imagine a window and its never changing view. *Window*, an opening in a building, vehicle, etc. for letting in light or air or for looking through, usually having a pane of glass in a movable frame.



(<http://vimeo.com/26328605>)

*Alphaville Hotel 8:10 OCEANIC TIME * this type fades up on the script image-writer machine.*

"... I've tried to fight it for many days. Slowly I'm disappearing behind the machine . . ."

**Iris widens: Hotel desk, stationery. The machine's probing camera lense snorkles out almost snapping at you hungry to be fed. This camera is mounted on the image machine.*

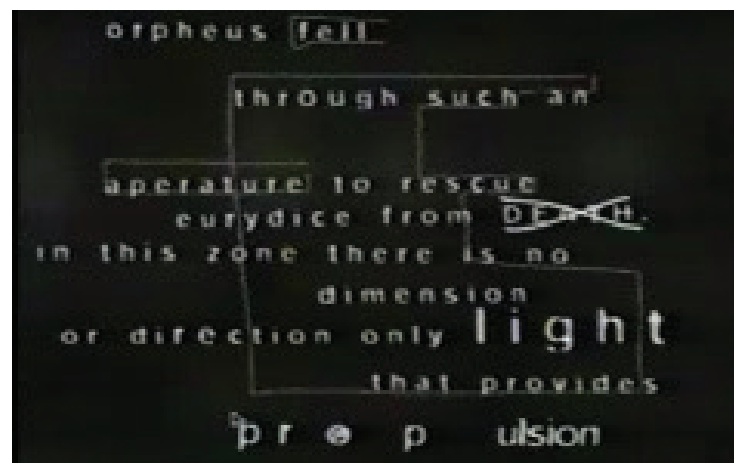
"I don't want to be seen. No."

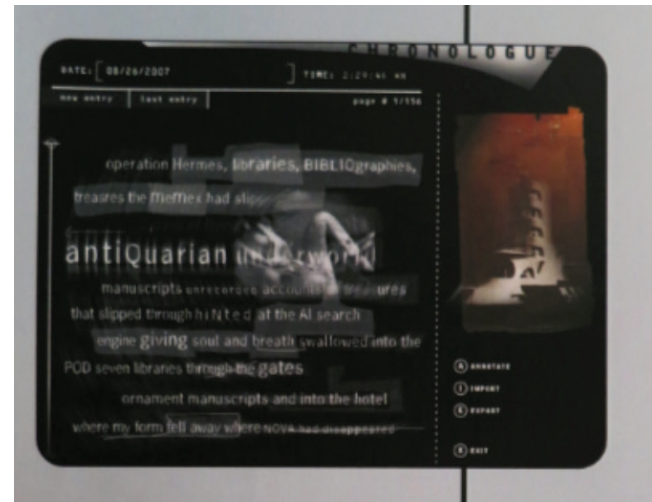
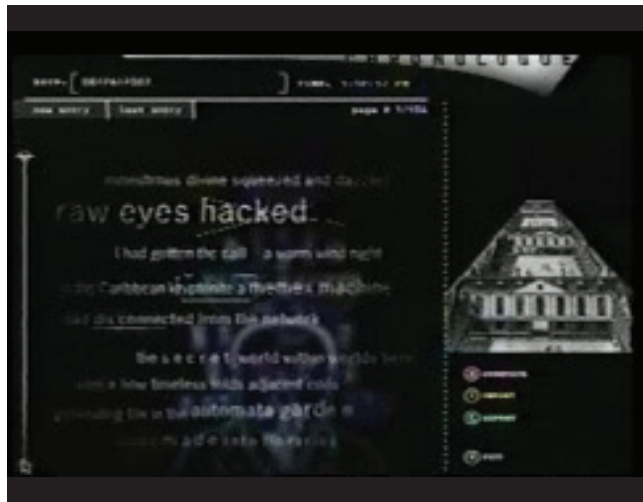
The lens iris closes.

"I've become a horribly disfigured thing. Like her."

Horrible sucking sounds. VIEWS OF THE MACHINE

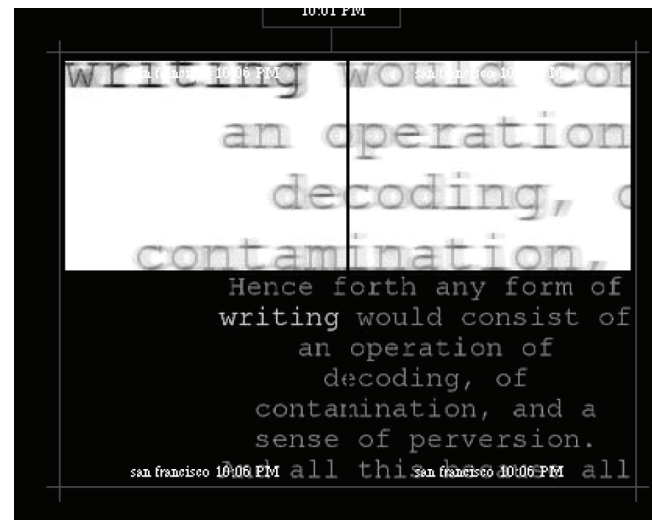
"For the longest time, I thought it was a magic trick, an illusory synthetic prestidigitation. How could such a thing remain beloved. A binary construction. Captured in a digital bottle. In my yearning for her form I found that she was formless. Like me now - the boundaries of my flesh dissolving away."





Hyper Hyper the Unbounded Wor(l)d, Computational Version, 1997

Hyper Hyper is a writing machine that distributes a writing/reading experience in a computational hypertextual platform. It plays in and out of the spaces of meaning and sense. One could say that meaning relies on depth while sense is a surface phenomenon. In the new space of computation, language is ever more clearly virus, a contamination, but also a typography, a visual force, a playground, a plaything, a place of discovery, of creation: a metabolic function doing its thing. This visual and graphic essay explores this new space of reading/writing while curating practices and reflections of the word at the same time.

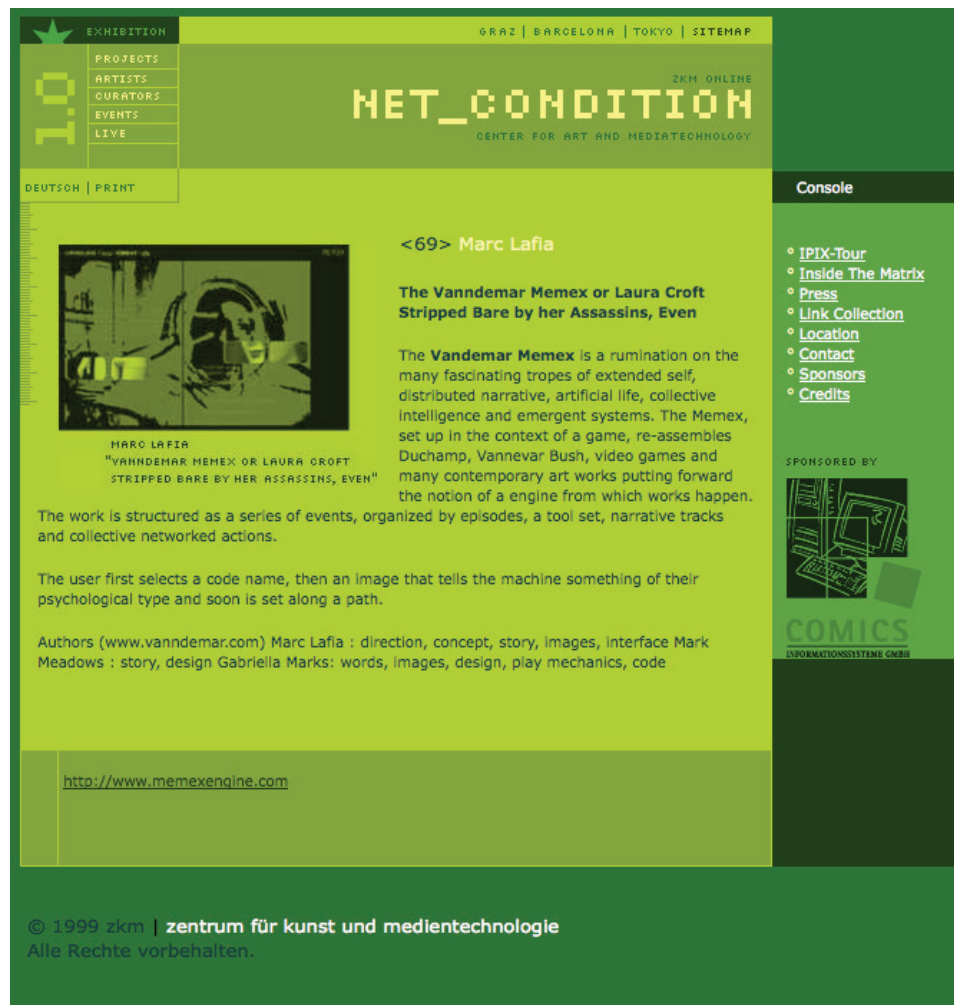


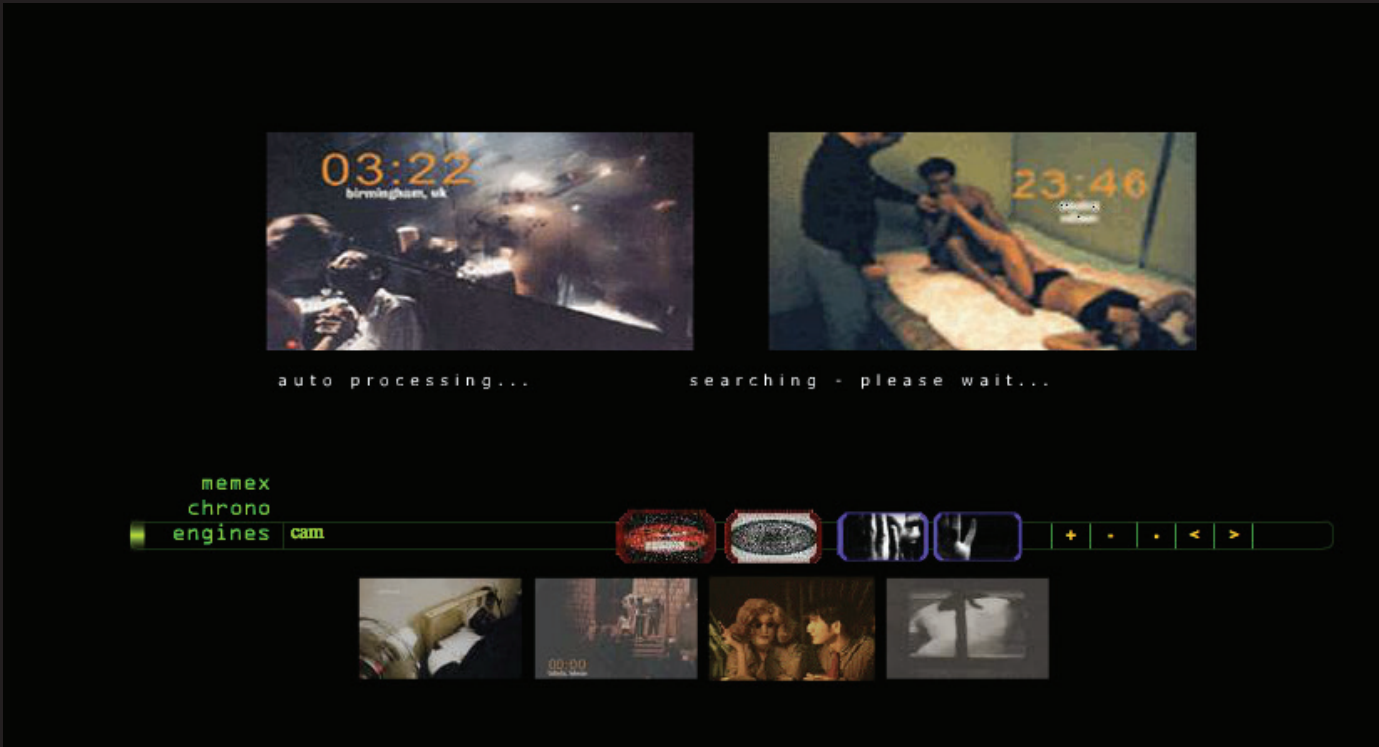
The Vanndemar Memex (Lara Croft Stripped Bare by Her Assassins, Even), 1999

(<http://memexengine.net>)

The *Vanndemar Memex* is a rumination on the many fascinating tropes of extended self, distributed narrative, artificial life, collective intelligence and emergent systems. The Memex, set up in the context of a game, re-assembles Duchamp, Vannevar Bush, video games and many contemporary art works putting forward the notion of an engine from which works happen. The work is structured as a series of events, organized by episodes, a tool set, narrative tracks and collective networked actions.

The *Memex Engine* and *Ambient Machines*. In them, instructions are used for interaction, for reading and playing in a certain sense.





nebular of a distant thought, you
are the statistical embrace;
your veins are necrophilic tethers,
your tendons cables
and carcasses
and lines of rising stars.



trapped under the sheets of a mirror you will forever hold the beauty of the eternal, your confessions will live forever in the house of the moon, and you, seance of culture, will reach through the soft laces of time and tear out the moorings of love.



nova
kryptonite
ella
corday
chandler

13	07	06
12		05
11		04
10		03
09		02
08		01



chandler had nothing to do with it.

try convincing him of that. not with his myopic view of the world as he knew it. his world. leashed in orbit around himself.

another enemy could hardly tarnish my reputation. press that expensive is hard to come by. still, flattered as i am, continue to be, by the blistering bileVenom of his attacks, he was purely incidental, less a target than an tinevitable pawn.



she was my focal point. i'd never even heard her voice live. but even the cruelest reproduction stained by static, was hypnotic. even now...it's an indispensable munition in my machines.

i wouldn't say that i engineered their meeting, hers and her lover, nova.

but i wouldn't deny it, either.




engines	nova
memex	kryptonite
chrono	ella
	corday
	chandler

13
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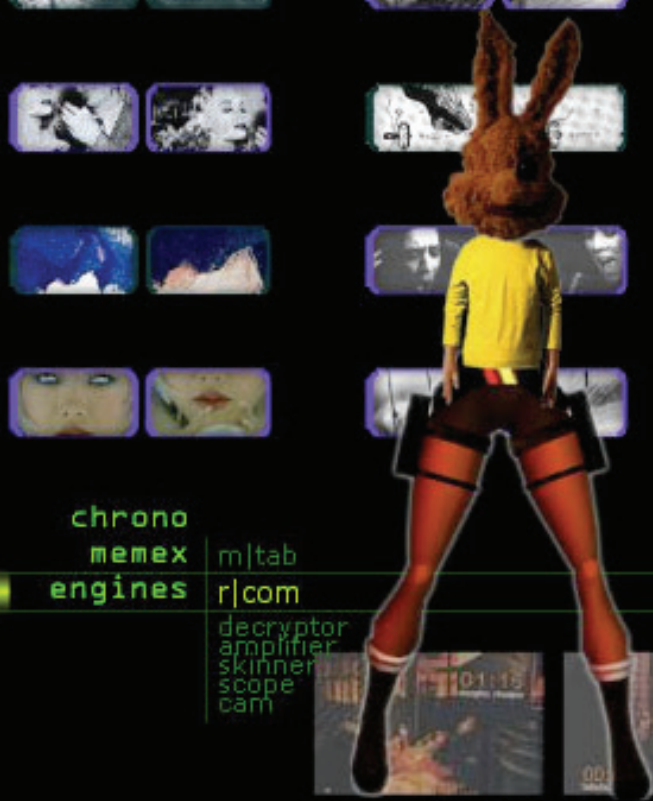




chrono	amplifier		
memex	skinner		
engines	scope cam		





chrono
memex
engines

m|tab
r|com
decryptor
amplifier
skinner
scope
cam



c 2000 marc lafia
meme-x engine



As you can see in these images, you could build a bunny suit or other combinatory outfits. It lead me to make *Ambient Machines*, where I wanted to make ambient non-narrative clips. It was the idea: what if we had a set of film clips and we could recompose them indefinitely and order them on multiple screens? This is what video installation is. But what if we could each share a set of moving images and re-arrange them and save our arrangement?

Art and Culture, 1999

(<http://vimeo.com/18680600>)

(<http://vimeo.com/18678895>)

I was the information architect for *artandculture.com*, a company I founded in the late nineties. It was infinitely extensible and there were a number of algorithms designed to make correlations and connections between the artists by virtue of sharing attributes. The idea was not to hardwire the relations but to let them emerge and come together at surprising angles.

I was interested in mapping my interest and love of the arts, from pop culture to more obscure things, across all the arts and philosophy, everything I loved, putting all the authors, recordings, images, ideas, artists, musicians, architects, choreographers, operas, in a new reading space, a computational space that allowed one to move both hierarchically through knowledge and at the same time laterally or associatively, allowing for discovery at surprising angles. The ideas of chance, any possible way, this way and that way, order and emerging order, all the many advances that delighted me in these other mediums could be furthered and played with in the space of computation and the network.

The first *artandculture.com* was beautiful. We had an extraordinary group of people and met with much success. It was sold unfortunately in distress in the heady dot com years and redone by new management which is what you see today. The original lost on a server in the ether.

ARTS

- Collapse all + Expand all

DESIGN ARTS

FILM

LITERATURE

MUSIC

Blues

Classical Music

20th-Century Music

Karlheinz Stockhausen

Country

Electronica

Experimental Music

Musique Concrete

Karlheinz Stockhausen

Folk

Hip Hop/Rap

Jazz

Opera

Pop Music

Rhythm and Blues

Rock Music

Soundtracks

World Music

PERFORMING ARTS

VISUAL ARTS

Search for an artist, movement, or keyword:



Aaron Copland

Tricky

Beastie Boys

Erik Satie

George Gershwin

Sir Michael Tippett

Karlheinz Stockhausen

20th-Century Music

Musique Concrete

collage

1850 60 70 80 90 1900 10 20 30 40 1950 60 70 80 90 2000

LIVED

WORKED

Artist worked from 1950 to 1968

Karlheinz Stockhausen

Born in a small farm town in Germany in 1928, progressive composer Karlheinz Stockhausen listened to the radio with his mother and playing what he heard on the piano. He began at eight, he was performing popular tunes for tips and food at the local café. Stockhausen's musical practicalities came when he realized that the more tunes he knew, the more

Stockhausen lost both parents during World War II. Nevertheless, he managed to cope with a series of odd jobs such as playing accompaniment for dance classes. Next, he began by night performing jazz and lounge music in local venues, by day throwing himself into the styles of such composers as Stravinsky and Webern.

It was the music of Webern that convinced Stockhausen to become a composer himself. The concept of "serialism" being pioneered by Webern, Messiaen, and Boulez. While studying and meeting with Boulez around the same time, Stockhausen came into contact with early electronic music. By the potentials of this new medium, Stockhausen would eventually make electronic music his favorite form of instrumentation.

Stockhausen has consistently ventured into unknown musical territory. Notable achievements include "Klavierstück XI," which consists of 19 note groups meant to be played in any order.

77

+ share this + add media + add artist

[+] collapse all

[+] DESIGN ARTS

[+] FILM

[+] LITERATURE

[+] Fiction

Classical & Biblical Literature

Medieval Fiction

16th Century (Renaissance) Literature

17th Century Literature

18th Century Literature

Victorian

Gothic Fiction

Aestheticist Fiction

Romantic Literature

Literature of Transgression

Algonquin Round Table

Bloomsbury

Existentialist Literature

Modernist Literature

Surrealist Literature

Post-War Literature

Naturalist Fiction

Harlem Renaissance Literature

Southern Gothic

Beats

Magical Realism

Nouveau Roman

Noir / Pulp Fiction

Oulipo

Postmodern Fiction

Cyberpunk Fiction

Neo-Ironic

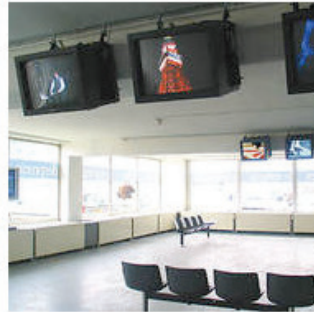
Contemporary

Comedianism

Fantasy

Add/Remove Connection

show connections: ☐ artists ☐ movements ☐ keywords ☐ enjoyers



Overview

Portfolio

Connections

Links

Enjoyers

Postmodern Fiction / edit

Amidst the cacophony of a late-twentieth-century world gone mad with hype, ultraconsumerism, and a superabundance of empty images, Postmodern writers engage in a literary freefall. Postmodernism, an ambiguous term as hazy as the literature it labels, was coined to connote the post-1950s phase of Western culture that has been marked by the mentality of the nuclear age and the excesses of conspicuous consumption. The term implies a Modernism that has entered a new, accelerated phase of development.

Postmodernist works reveal a penchant for boundless superficiality and random sensations combined with a benumbed stance of detached irony. Writers rely on a conglomeration of methods — typically including bricolage, pastiche, fabulation, and metafiction — to convey the complex absurdity of contemporary life. They ignore the Modernist distinctions between high and low art, fiction and reality; instead, all elements and voices are equally compelling, fascinating, and true. This absence of hierarchical categories converges in the Postmodern lack of a grand narrative, which has traditionally been the grail formula of Modernist novels.

However muddled by experiments in stream-of-consciousness or weighted symbolism, the Modernist novel still required a linear structure in order to fashion a world of obstacles that the protagonist must navigate. In contrast, the Postmodern novel is free of such baggage, loosened in both time and space; this genre tends to avoid traditional closure of themes or situations. For Postmodernists, the pleasure lies not in the inevitability of closure but in the multiplicity of openings. Authors who play with Postmodern techniques and themes include Kathy Acker, Italo Calvino, Don DeLillo, Thomas Pynchon, and Kurt Vonnegut.

Portfolio

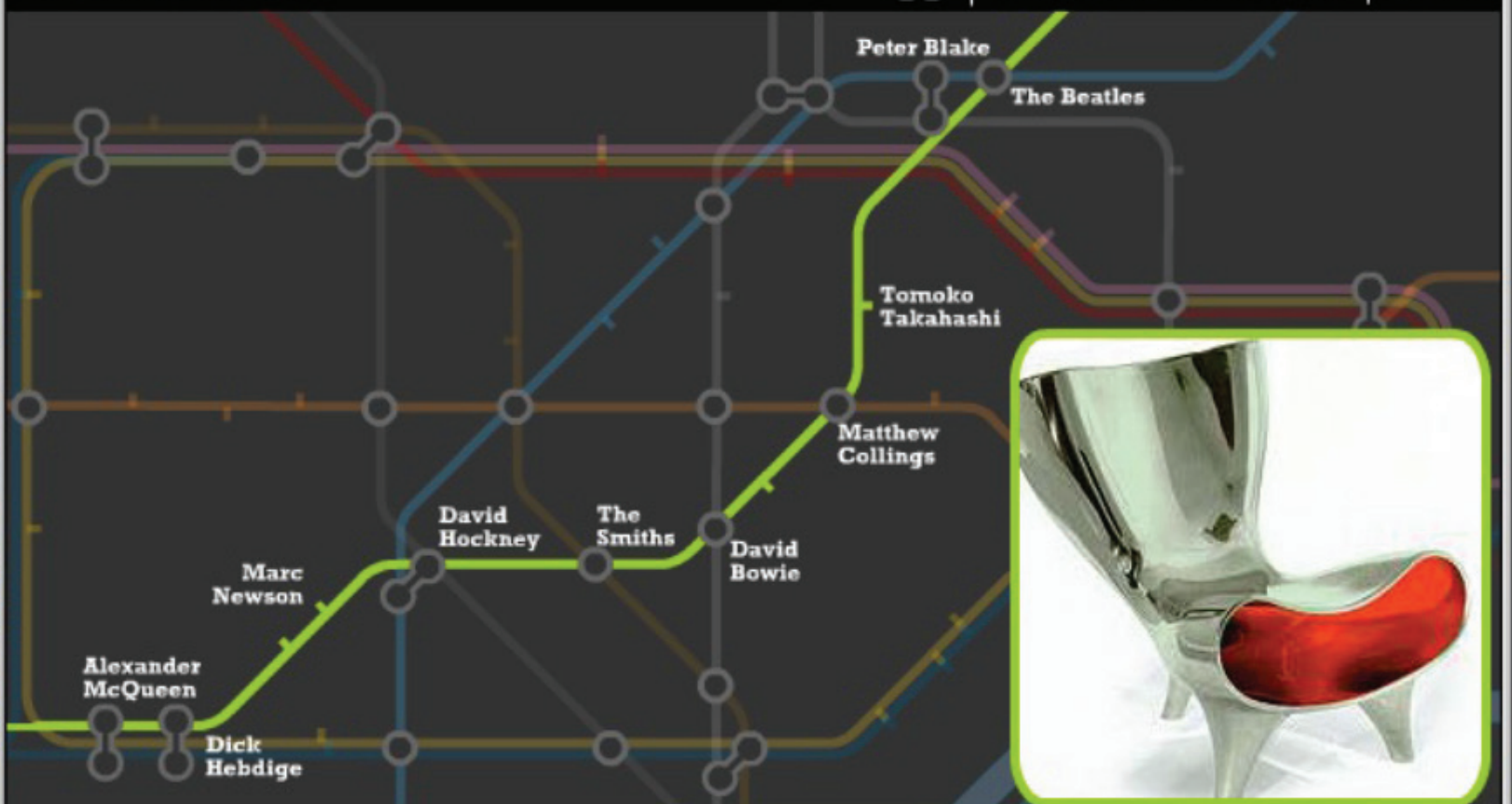
show all



Enjoyers

show all

London Station

[links to all London artists](#)[credits](#)

Key to themes

- Class
- Grotesque
- Humor
- Hybrid
- Mod
- Pop
- Rave

Pop

Marc Newson

A thoroughly contemporary lounge chair whose anthropomorphous qualities recall a time when full, soft bodies were all the rage -- this could only be a Newson.

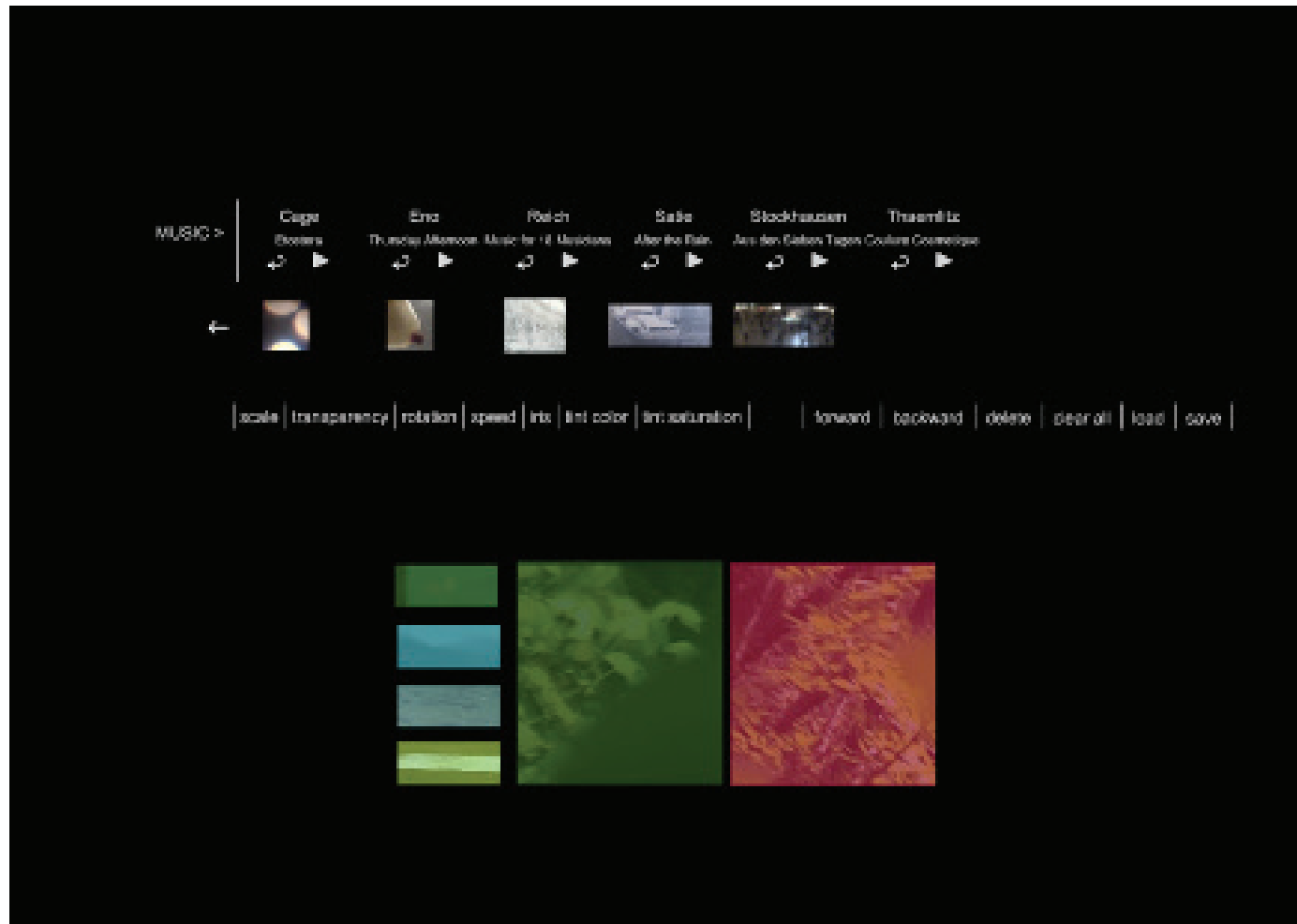
[Next >](#)

Ambient Machines, 2000

(<http://www.ambientmachines.net/>)

*The ambient machine, explores the setting of visual language,
on the surface of the screen according to cinematic technique.
Here seen in The Cinematic Construction of Emotional Space*

In *Ambient Machines*, made in 2000, I created an interface to a number of film and music clips and gave to users filters to tint the clips, slow them down, arrange them on the screen and save their results. This work, as the title suggests, was a machine, a software machine that could produce any number of unique works within the parameters of the software environment.



Ambient Machines would become *Ambientnet*, a mixing station for an ever emerging environment.



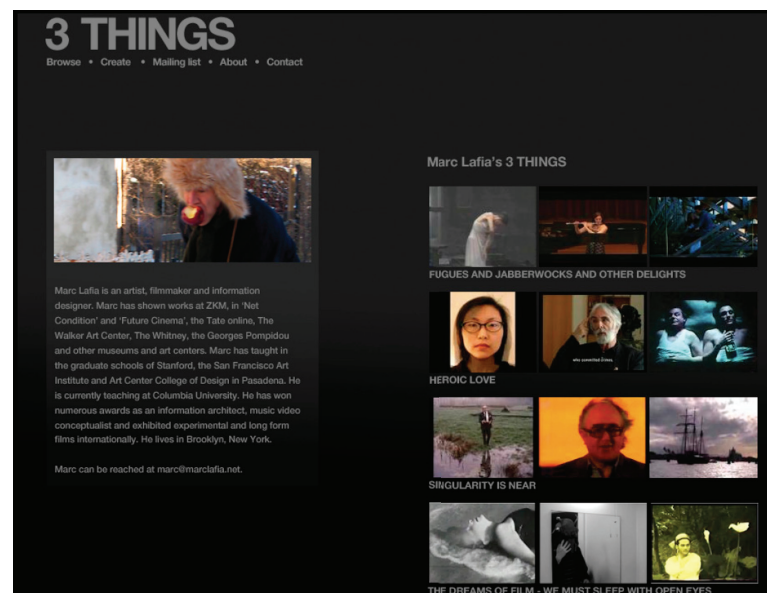
Ambientnet sits at the desktop as a streaming media mix of a multiplicity of clips and sounds. It is an engine, a machine that allows others to compose varied mixes. The engine is a mixing station that is always on and composing itself. It is an active portrait of the contents therein. It is as much a machine making new clips as it is any particular clip per se. It uses computation and the network as both an optic onto the world and as a sort of visual synthesizer. It is an open source project where others can participate. As each new URL or image, sound or video is added to the system, the elements that comprise and contextualize the network change and so does the mix.

Three Things, 2007

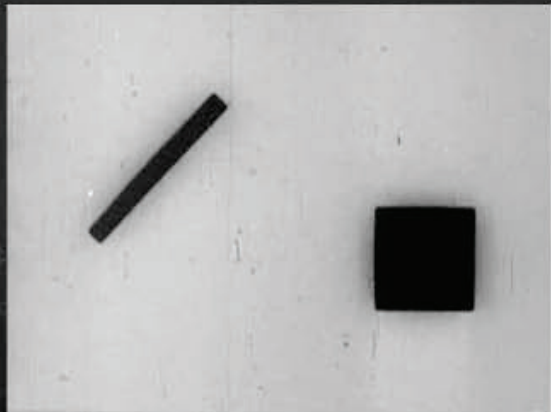
(<http://vinylisheavy.blogspot.com/2007/08/sound-youre-watching.html>)

In some sense, the phenomenon of YouTube returns us to the early days of cinema which have been referred to, before its language of narrative and editing evolved, as a cinema of attractions. In these early days, when cinema was a novelty, an entrepreneur, someone like Edwin S. Porter (who would go on to make *The Great Train Robbery*) would buy up a number of short films, go from town to town, rent a hall, publicize his event and gather up an audience for a screening. There, with his reels of film and accompanying musician, the entrepreneur who was also the projectionist would create an order to his films, cue his music and in many cases talk over them. The entrepreneur was a story teller, our first editor, who used sound to narrativize any arrangement of reels of images he cared to play.

The sound/image relationship for the moving image did not become uniform until the late 1920s and the advent of synch sound. It is sound that so often tells us what we are watching. In the creation of *Three Things*, anyone can place three videos next to each other, and then move the mouse to play the audio of any one video to orchestrate all three. It is this use of sound that is most distinct about the project, or rather what distinguishes it. It is not three images and their sounds playing side by side simultaneously, it is three images uniquely inflected by the unique sound of the others and the ability to control the sound tracks one at a time. It is the ability to re-narrativize the image with sound that makes the project unlike others out there.



ABSTRACT CINEMA created by Marc Lafia



RHYTHMUS 21, HANS RICHTER, 1921



PETER KUBELKA WATCHING ARNULF RAINER I

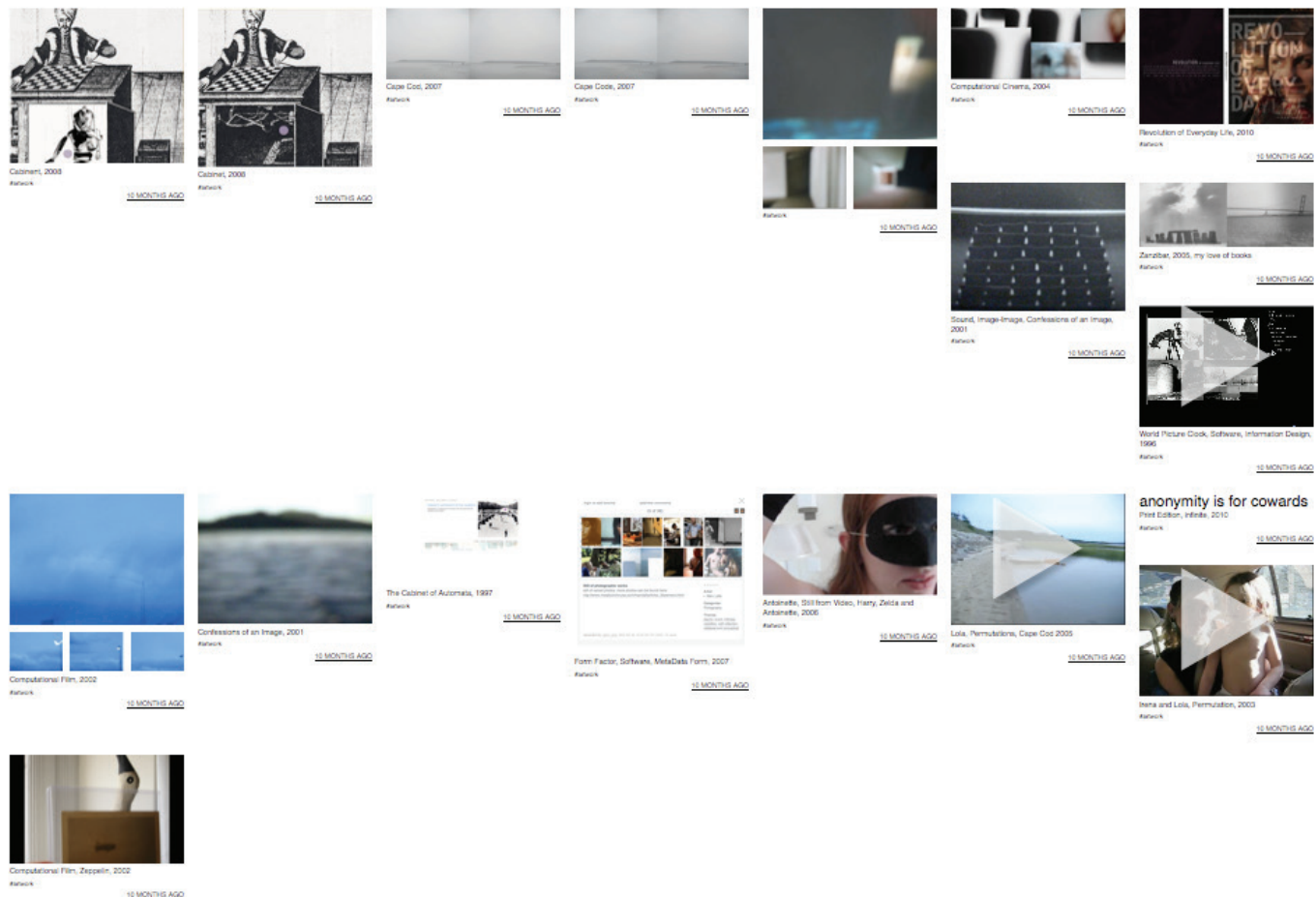


SYMPHONIE DIAGONALE BY VIKING EGGELING

Writing Space, 2011

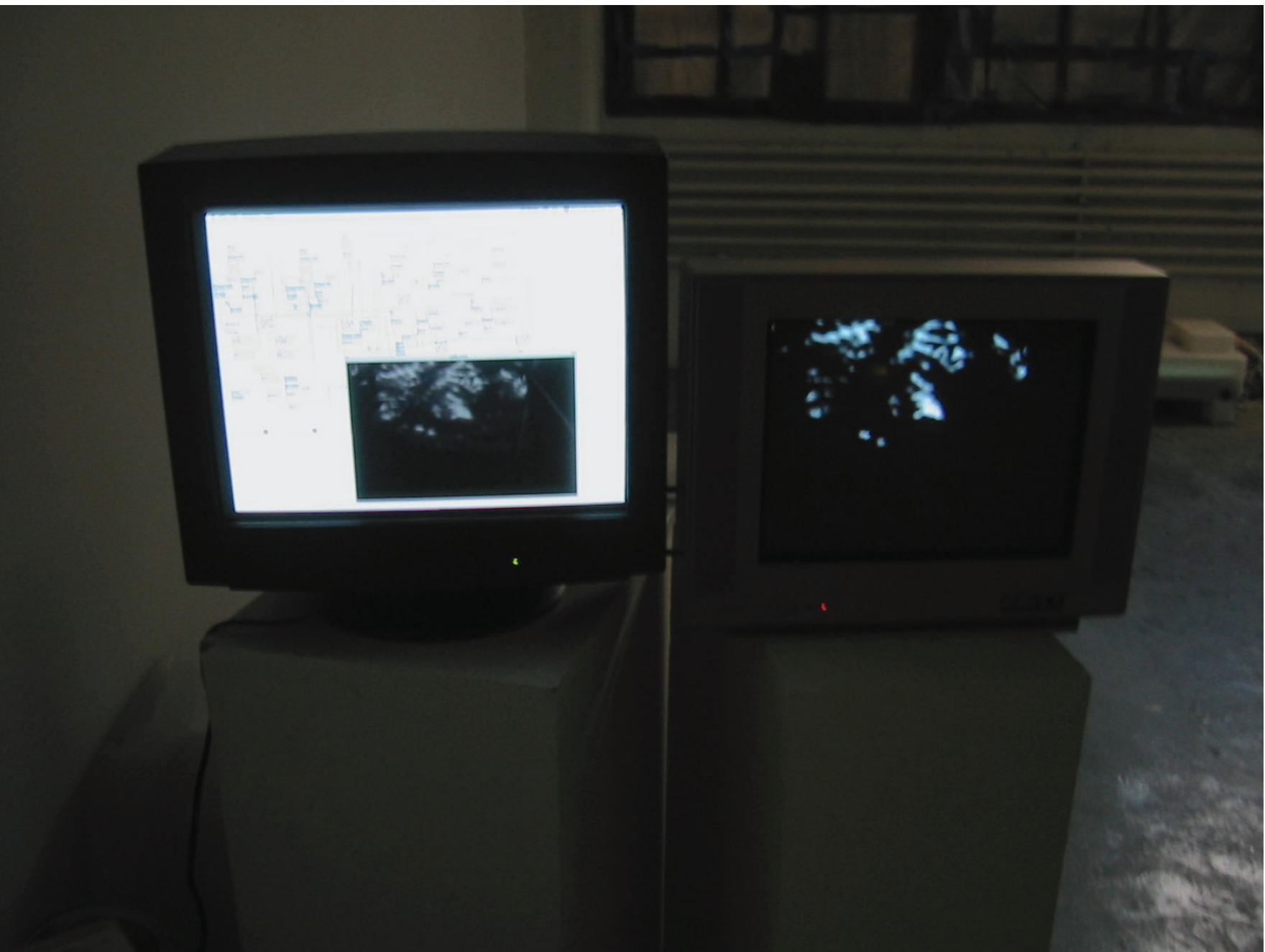
(<http://marclafia.tumblr.com/>)

Writing Space presents over 200 mixed media works, my own and others in an all-at-once reading space. By removing the CSS left and right margins of a “public” themed Tumblr blog and with use of “infinite scroll,” this customized blog presents a new event of reading. As most reading is one thing after another or in the space of the web, hyperlinked, this all-at-onceness at first confounds and overwhelms until one begins to see the whole of it. Nevertheless, where to begin? It cannot be understood as a linear construction, beginning at the beginning and proceeding through the middle to the end. One of the most striking things of computational readings is that the page can be reconfigured. In this work, one can drag out the bottom right hand corner of the “page” and make a horizontal browsing window where one can see one entry after the next.



In this two screen, or two monitor work as installed at M3 Projects in DUMBO, I am interested in the relationship between these two grammars, one of repetition and the other, iteration. Using the same piece of video footage, one run as a continuous loop (actually two loops intersecting) and the other run in a computational engine, I am interested in the dialogue and correspondence of these differences and how they figure duration.





Variable Montage, 2002

A work of computational and algorithmic cinema

As cinema is informed by computation montage, it becomes less about narration and more about construction. Such constructions can be thought of as architectures of possibility. In this work, twenty-seven still frames from a Russian film are broken into five segments that continually vary and permute. Permutation allows for a continuing inflection of various possibilities of meaning and texture. Each of the five segments has also associated with them a small phrase from Mahler's *Ninth Symphony* and these sounds vary pitch, alternate and overlap as the speed of the images and sequences play. As image is driven by computation, montage becomes variable and loses the preciseness of rendition that traditional cineastes practice. Variability as constructed with computation allows for a continual iteration, a continual play within very defined structures of possibility and in some sense changes our very notion of montage. The results of this montage give forth surprise, coincidence, deformation, collision, ambiguity and all possibilities of excess. This excess, characteristic of the digital, naturally tends to proliferate, multiply and replicate.

Whereas in cinema the film projector is a fixed instrument consisting of a single projection, where silent films play back at 16 or 18 frames a second and sound films 24 frames a second, in software the "projector" is simultaneously a playback and authoring machine. It becomes a variable instrument that can be instructed to play or project the film along particular and varied instructions. This work, authored in Max/MSP, translates each image into a number and each set of images are given variables within which they are sequenced and ordered in relation to all other images.

In software and more particularly computation, projection and recording become inextricably linked. Image, as well, is no longer material but a virtuality actualized by instructions. If we can say there is a materiality, it is in the instruction sets or code by which image and sound are realized or actualized. Instructions in computation can also be made variable, such that a work can have varied permutations and order. Variability can be thought of as an affirmation of chance more than a reduction to probabilities or range of randomness.

In this three screen work [*presented here as three windows on a single monitor*], the twenty-seven frames of black and white film and fifteen seconds of sound are composed to have infinite duration, that is, play continually varying and alternating sound and image as long as the program runs, and the composition can run along various presets infinitely within tightly defined parameters. In this sense, the work is not closed, nor is it known, until the event of computational "projection."

Variable Montage is as much an engine or structure for possible films as it is a film per se. Each film (if we can call them that) is the unique utterance or enunciation in the event of a language, which each time is to be invented and spoken anew. In computational imaging, time and sequence take on an entirely new sense, perhaps it is the difference of becoming rather than unfolding, where each time through the engine of computation a film becomes, revealing something essential about computation as an engine of possibility and something about cinema as a fixed machine of the particular.

FUTURECINEMA

来たるべき時代の映像表現に向けて
December 12 (Friday), 2003 - February 29 (Sunday), 2004 Gallery A, B

Works

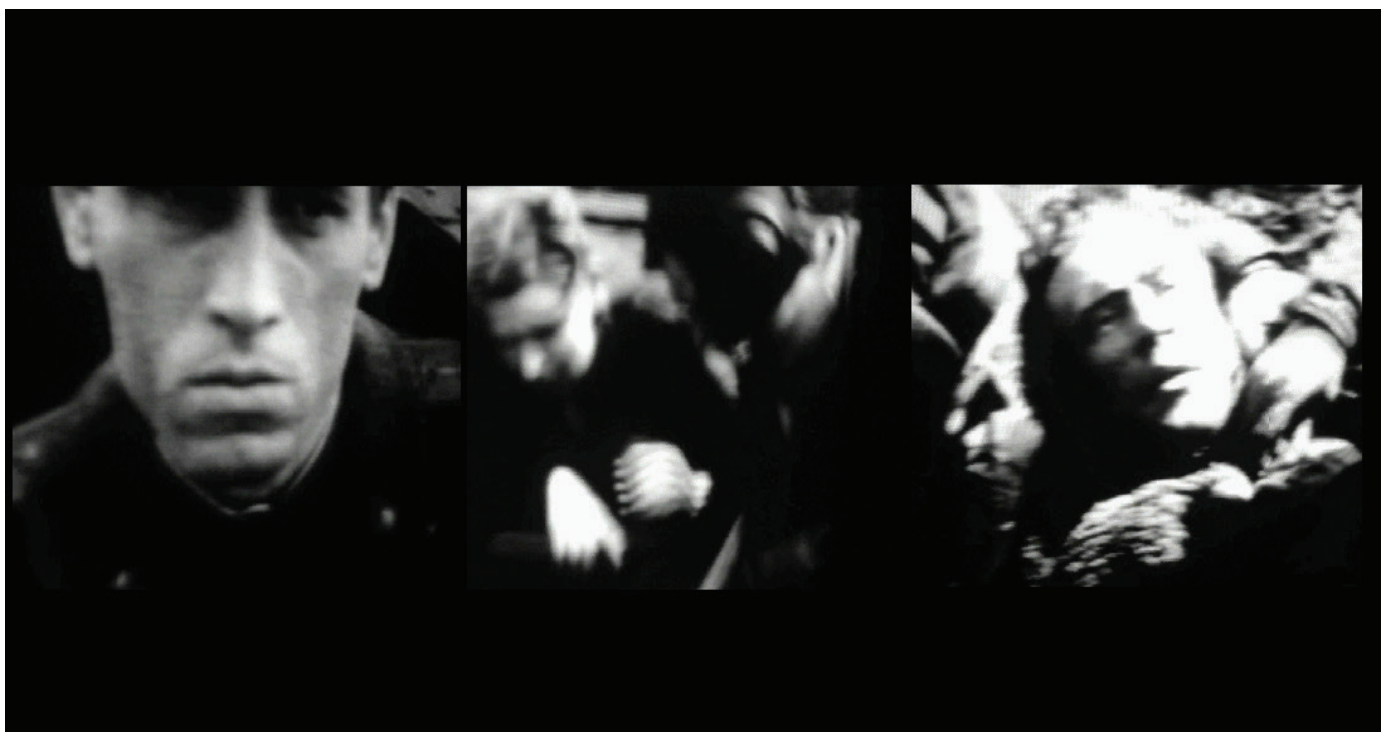
"Variable Montage"

2002

Marc LAFIA



This work is for expanded concept of cinematographic montage in the context of structural parameters provided by software and computation inextricably linking projection and recording.. It consists from three part image and show itself as much an engine or structure for possible films as it is a film per se.



4

Computations

Variability, remixability, versioning, editioning, dispersion are all characteristics of the instrumentation of computation, engineering, software, read/listen/watch/write/re-write – programs. Procedure and program, these are the things that interest me. And today they are very, very common.

In the world of art, instructions coming out of conceptual art and avant-garde music is not at all new. Think only of Sol LeWitt, Yoko Ono, La Monte Young, Pierre Boulez through to Sophie Calle, Oulipo, each working with a prescribed sets of constraints. These artists worked with algorithms and instructions prior to our world of software and computation which of course amplifies and takes further instructions.

I was first introduced to the idea of computation by a musician and saw that it allowed for continual iteration and variability. My films now would be made with instructions, in this case instructions of code.

In algorithmic computation, the movement of stillness, viewed in a continuum, is something other than the cinematograph: it is an ellipsis of movements or instances in a varying or computational register of ordering and time. In such a register, one that is computational and algorithmic, the movement of instances (as in 24 frames a second) is not sequential (as if to replicate the real) but simply instances, movements to be ordered in any which way.

Joan of Arc, Computational Montage (length variable)



The film is made by a set of instructions that both generate new sounds and new shot durations. It's made in a program designed in MAX/MSP/Jitter. The films (and hundreds of them I've made) can play for hours and days and years, never repeating themselves. It is endlessly emerging. As my friend would say,

There is no original, only versions to infinity and it is beautiful.

Microarchitextures (length variable)



Where the one work is made of instructions, the one is fixed. The film was made at a period when I was very interested in micro sounds. It's made with one photograph. I made a number of 1 image films.

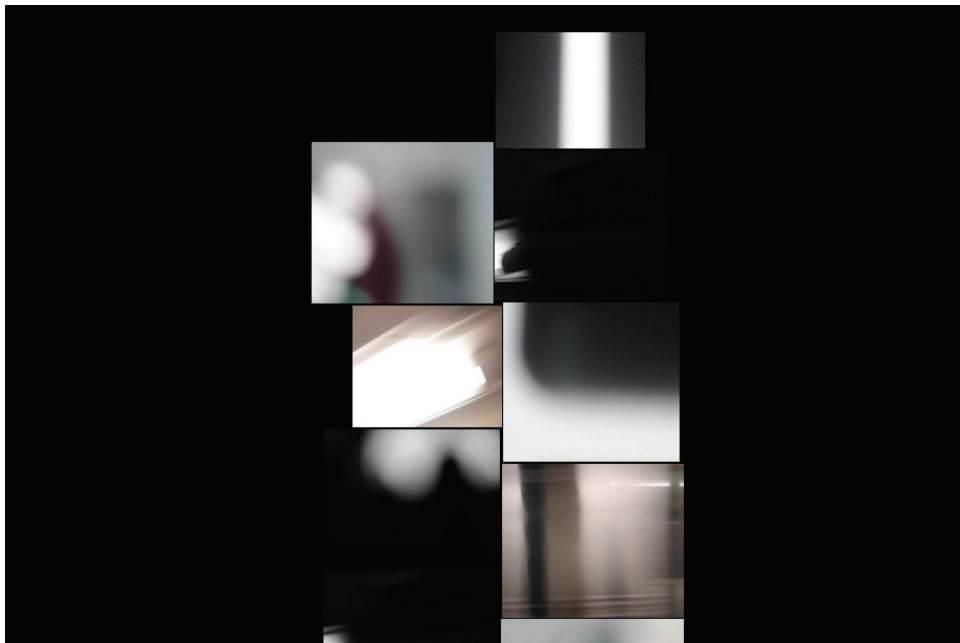
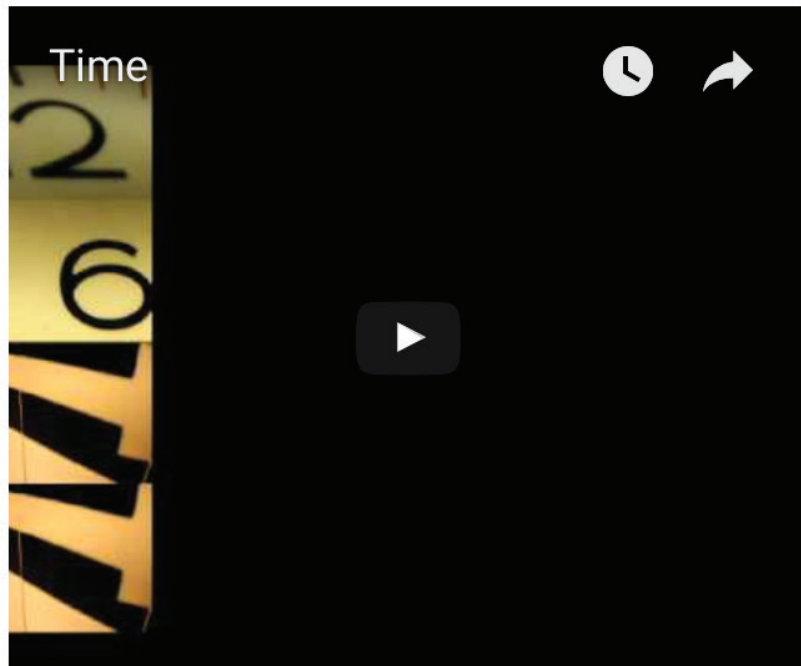
But note the difference, where the first film can play infinitely, the second is finite. Around 2002, I wanted to rewrite the film projector in software as a variable instrument. Film, as most of us know, comes to us as a single channel or one screen, fixed temporal event. And, as its one screen, we have a *mise-en-scène* of one shot following another. But it does not need to be that way.

With this new computational instrument, the stratagem of orchestrating the movement of image instances in something entirely different, each image is discrete and atemporal, and in time I will explore it in relation to the figuration of story and representation.

In my previous work, the photograph, the film frame, and the video field have each been the discrete unit that iterates, permutes within an envelope of computational possibility. In this proposed work, I want to further my existing MAX Patch as an authoring platform to arrange and sequence narrative instances. The outcome is to make a multiple video window and surround sound installation in a flexible authoring environment that is variable and computational.

Record





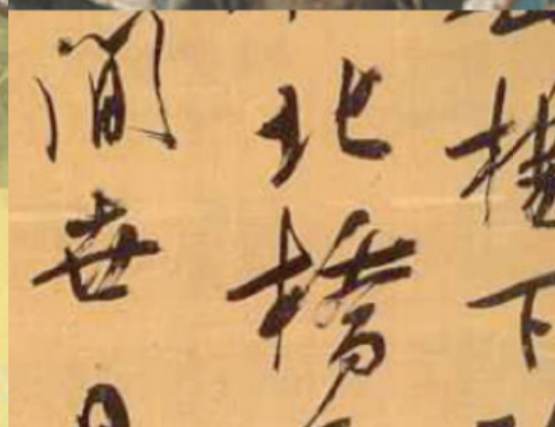
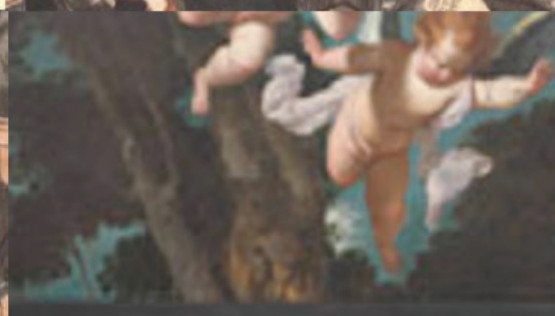
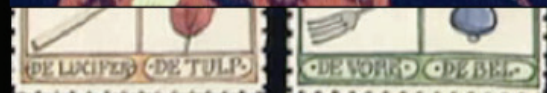
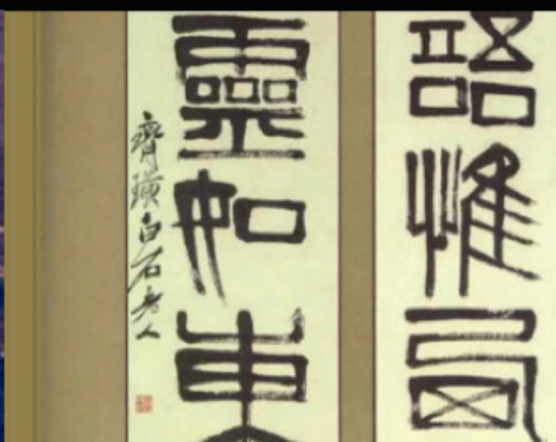
Midsummer





Textures, 2007





5

Permutations

I've written about *Permutations* in *Everyday Cinema* but want to mention them here. Once you begin to see things as multiple and iterative, mutable and relational, the idea of the image, the ontology of the image, the single image, the image alone, begins more and more to lose authority. Perhaps that is why in the mid 90s we began to see lifesize and larger photographs. Size can confer authority, but regardless of the size of the image, there is always a next image, an image answering, conversing with another image.

Permutations are multi-screen films Lafia started in 2005 that he produced once a day with a Canon Xapshot digital camera over a period of several years that can be viewed at Lafia's Cinema Engine site. In *Permutations*, Lafia continued to pursue his interest in "the instrumentation of playback in multiple screens and what could be articulated and continually re-articulated in the image-sound relationship through permutation" as "played and composed in a software environment created in MAX MSP." Influenced by the work of Raymond Queneau and Georges Perec, and Oulipo, the group Queneau and Perec formed in France in 1960 that investigated strategies for constrained writing for potential literature, Lafia explores in *Permutations* how sound inflects the image and what potential cinemas can emerge from the digital characteristic of an excess of organizational and narrative tropes.

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marc_Lafia)

In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari proffer three modes of artist production that correspond, more or less, to three historical eras: the classical, the romantic, and the modern (see "Of the Refrain"). The classical artist, they claim, is he who lends form to the formless, who forges the very world itself, Yahweh amidst the clay, artist as god. The romantic artist, on the other hand, speaks the forces of the earth: The mountains! The ocean! The undulations of this earthly world!

The modern artist, meanwhile, harnesses the forces of the cosmos. He stands amidst the fray of the cosmic winds, amidst the great swirls of galaxies just taking shape, at the limit of sense, at that precarious juncture of order and chaos. And rather than extending his will over this great teeming, he proffers a gesture or two, hedging here and there, allowing these forces to express themselves within these or those stipulations. The modern artist remains at the periphery of this production, lending shape but not shaping, allowing a form to become, not forging the form.

This artist faces two risks. On the one hand, chaos: the production never comes to the fore as it is torn asunder by the very forces it seeks to harness. Look at Lafia's films: they are constantly on the verge of collapse, of veering off the screen and back into the teeming chaos of the cosmos (what Joyce and Guattari call "the chaosmos"). Each *Permutation* risks nonsense, pure babble, form never

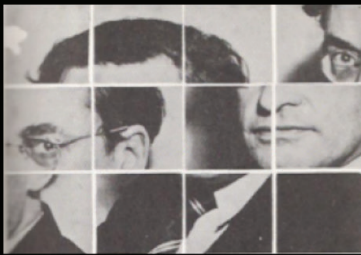
quite coalescing, no consistency ever getting a foothold, as it were. In fact, we might say that each *Permutation* slides here and there into the chaosmos as it takes its shape before our eyes, a relentless movement from nonsense to sense, from sense to nonsense.

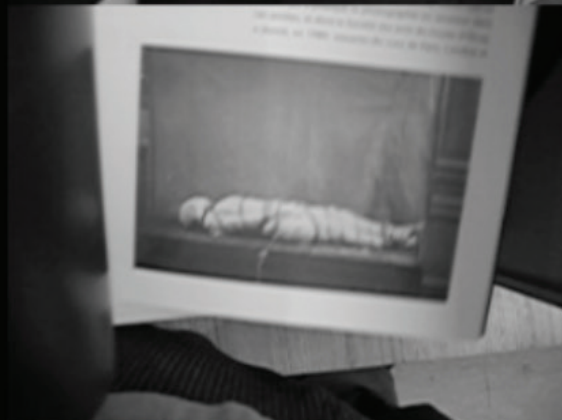
The other risk of the modern artist is too much form, over-doing it, dampening or deadening the forces of the cosmos. Lafia avoids this risk by disallowing any post-production editing. And by the play of sound that persistently recasts each image: as the sound of one image plays, it inflects all the other images thereby letting this shape of the cosmos—this shape right here, before our eyes—emerge and play as it will.

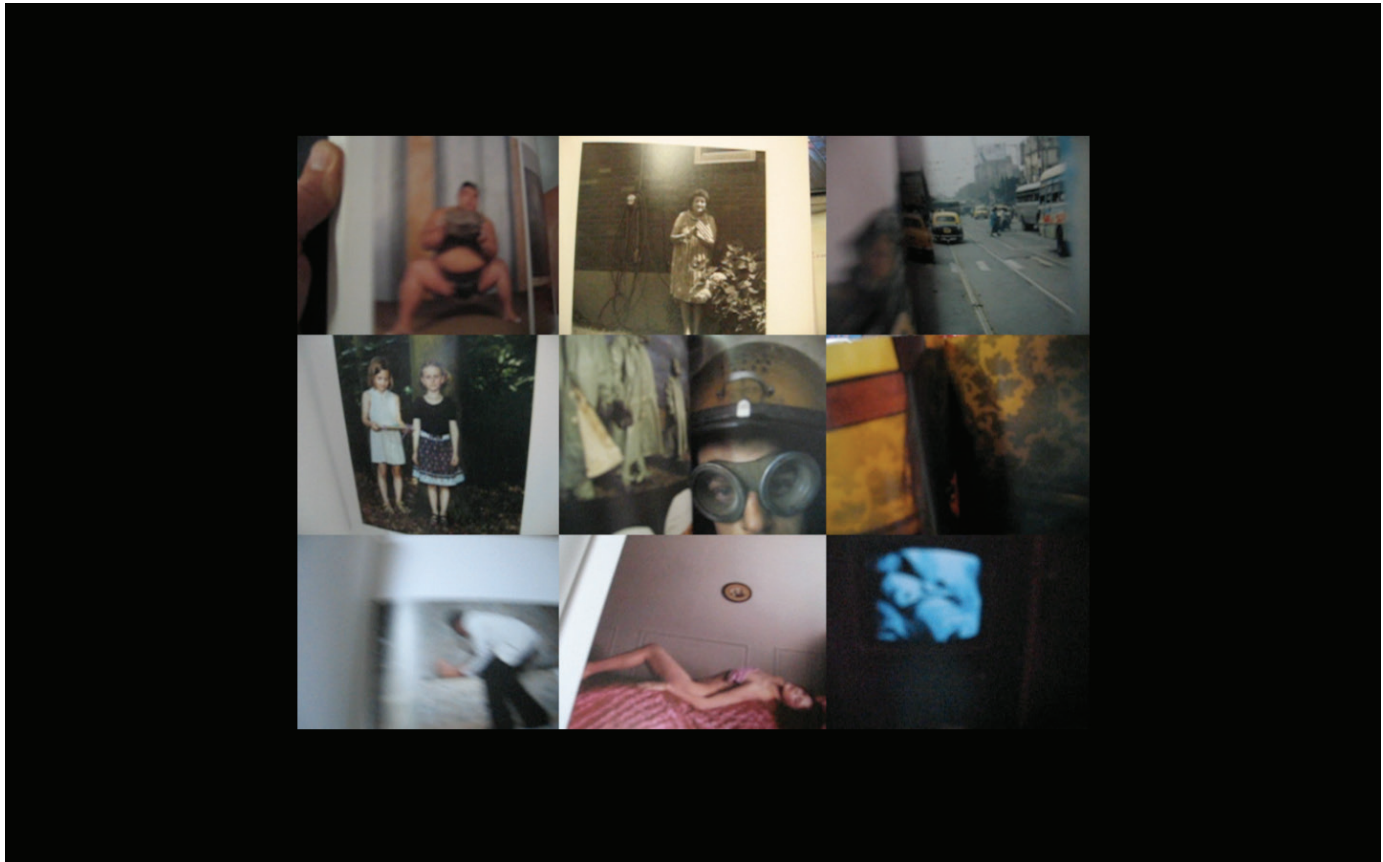
Lafia, then, is not a filmmaker or photographer. He does not capture or create images; he accrues them. Lafia is an agent of the image; he does its bidding. He is not the embodied eye lurking behind or within the technology; he does not “use” the camera to express himself or his vision or the world. On the contrary, the camera uses him. Or rather, the image uses him and the camera is one component of the image. Of course, Lafia is not irrelevant; he is a productive cog within this image-making machine. After all, the images in *Permutations* are beautiful. Lafia has good taste, his eye and ear function as an effective screen, letting these images through but not those. The image might beckon but he gets to choose which will make its way—which is lucky for us.

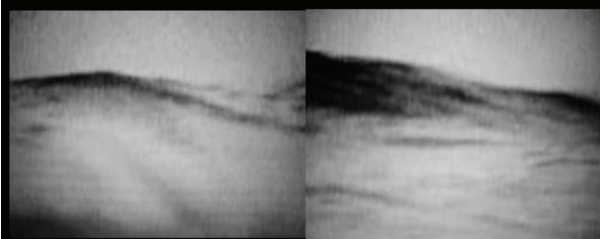
But he is not the master. Lafia heeds the call of the image by putting the tools of imaging in play (his cameras and computer) and proliferating images

(Daniel Coffeen)

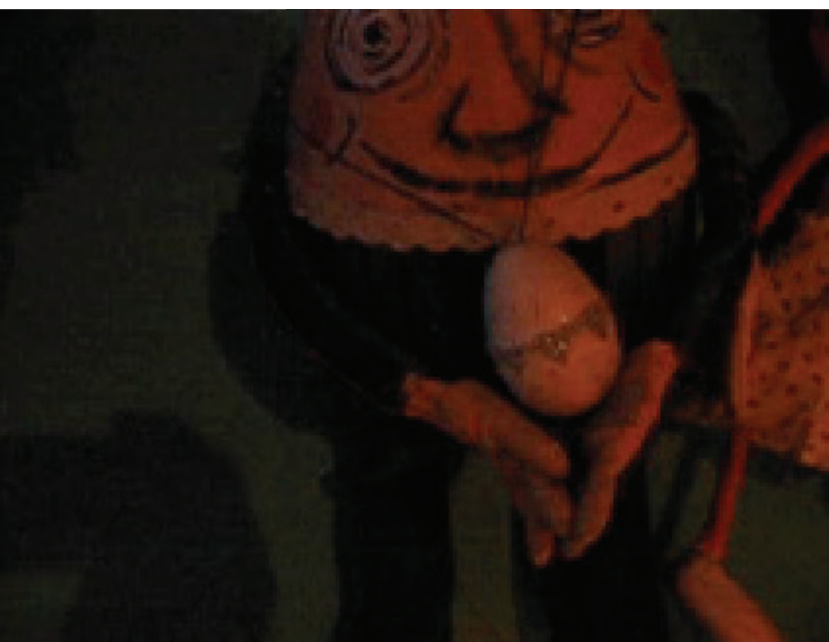




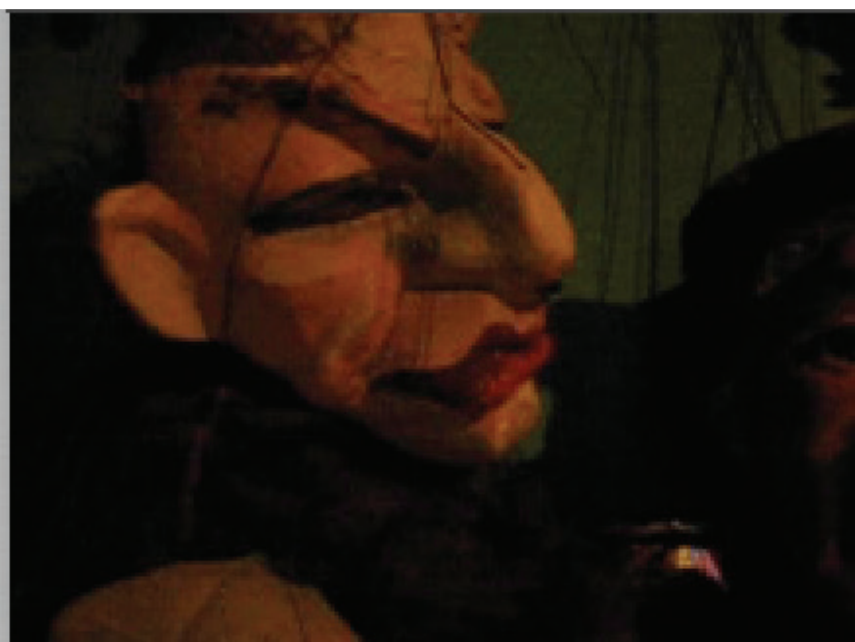




From internally displacing and attenuating time by repetition of a small set of images to an assemblage of various clips that make up a particular permutation in real time (Muybridge to Qeuneau).



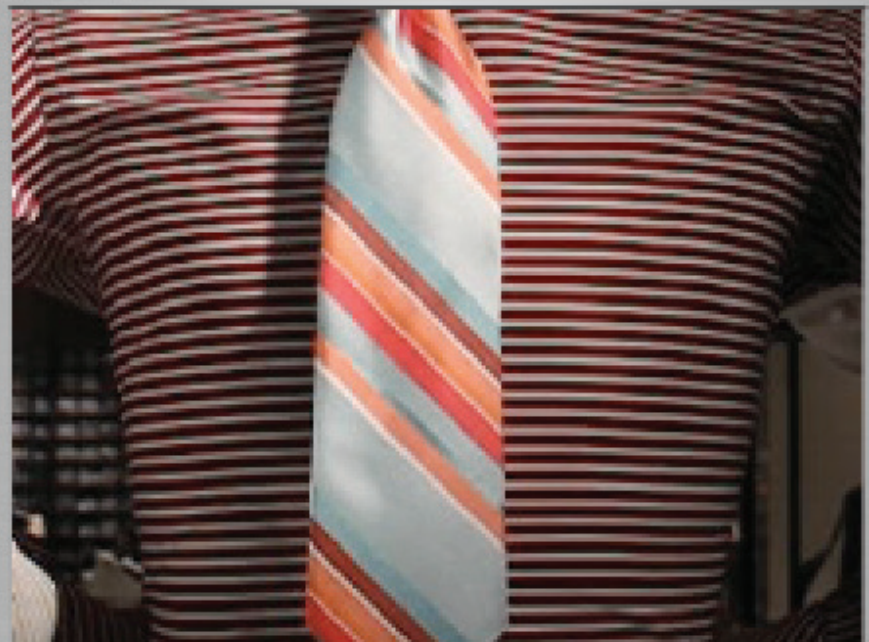
616_1654.AVI



616_1697.AVI

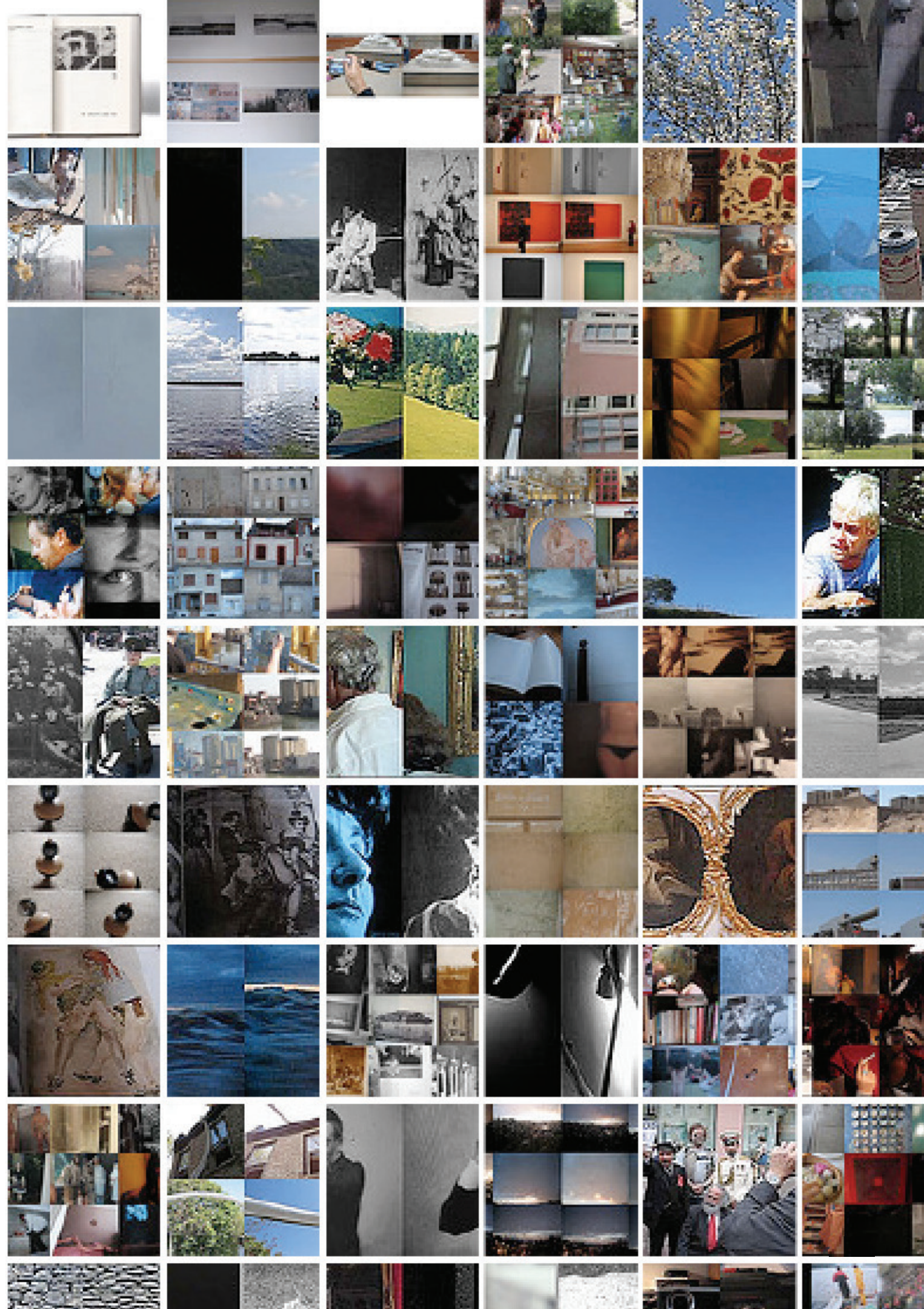


616_1660.AVI



616_1696.AVI









6

**This
Battle
of Algiers:
Cinema as
Database,
Lines of Force**

In *Battle of Algiers*, commissioned by the Whitney and Tate Modern, I wanted to re-present the logic of the contestants in Gillo Pontecorvo's film *Battle for Algiers* as presented in the dramaturgy as algorithmic instructions. What was seen in the film as an enacted drama is seen in the app as lines of force trying to control and occupy space.



Battle of Algiers **at** Programmed: Rules, Codes, and Choreographies in Art 2019
The Whitney Museum of American Art

In some sense, all films are computational, all films a kind of .net art. Think about it: a film is the product of a selection from different shots, hours of dailies and coverage—the film rests on a database. The film we end up seeing is only one possibility; cut it again and there's a different movie. And then there's the manner in which these scenes and these shots come to be this film. The director, the editor, the producers, the screenwriters—not to mention an entire cast of interested parties—conspire to make the final cut we see. Which is to say, films are built on a database and are authored by a network.

Of course, most of the films that make it to the Cineplex these days do not seem like .net art. They are stories, moving along according to some human law of inevitability: the would-be lovers overcome their misunderstandings, the family reconciles, the fighter wins—or loses—but in any case learns a lesson. These films are based on screenplays, on words, on stories; they're illustrated storybooks. They do not really operate with the modalities of the moving image. We don't witness the multiplicity, the varied directions, implicit in the film, that's implicit in all films, the multiplicity that's implicit in the meeting of database and network. It's as if these filmmakers assume that because the movie reel is continuous the story must be continuous, that because there's one screen they can only project one image.

(Daniel Coffeen, *Film, Play, Power and the Computational, or Byting Celluloid*, February 2006)

When I did my piece on the film *The Battle of Algiers* for the Tate and Whitney Museums, I transposed the dramaturgy into lines of force, putting in play the cell structures of the Algerian resistance and their movements in contradistinction to the hierarchical structures of the French Army. Here, cinema's representations are translated into the pure movement of these opposing sides.

...The Battle of Algiers, the artwork well represents the modalities in which the so called new (digital) media deal with contents that come from traditional media, trying to RE-WRITE them in a way that is the most peculiar to the interactive and procedural vocation of the digital medium...

On the one side, “modernity,” the age of the novel and of cinema, which has its peculiar forms in narration and rigid sequentiality, and on the other side the “computer era,” in which the narrative form is superseded by database. Now, we certainly could argue that both novels and films have often tried to react “from the inside” to the regime of narrative sequentiality, inventing new forms of narration, subverting orders, frequencies, lengths and so on. It remains the fact that the film which is watched by spectators and the novel which is read by the reader remain fixed in their only possible sequences, and are static and linear texts (obviously to be filled and interpreted by the user).

In opposition to the textual and narrative system stands the database, the characteristic paradigm of contemporary creativity and of its aesthetics, the symbolic form of computer based artworks. With the term “database” in information technology, we define a structured set of data organized to be searched in a quick and logical way, to be compared, linked, and used for particular operations.

The other interesting example I would like to present is *The Battle of Algiers* by Marc Lafia and Fang Yu Lin. *La battaglia di Algeri* (1966) by Gillo Pontecorvo is the source on which the software *The Battle of Algiers* operates. The movie, awarded at the Festival del Cinema of Venice in the 1966, is a portrait of the Algerian anti-colonialist struggle which led to the independence of the north African country in 1962, after 8 years of fights between the French army and the National Liberation Front. The facts told by Pontecorvo focus in particular on the period 1954–1957, and on two main characters, on the one side the Algerian Ali La Pointe (symbol of the anti-colonialist struggle), and on the other the French colonel Mathieu. Despite the presence of these main figures, *La battaglia di Algeri* gives up to concentrate on the single characters, and prefers to show collective actions mostly.

(Cristiano Poian, “Investigating Film Algorithm: Transtextuality in the age of database cinema”)

7

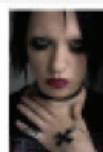
Self-Exposures,
F4,
the
Desktop
Photography
Collective

With the advent of web 2.0. the entire world puts on the performance of the now.

If the first generation web was about seeing or an optic onto the world, which some say was passive viewing, by 2004 forward, the upsurge of user generated content, image based bulletin boards, micro blogging, social interaction and collaboration exploded. Inside these platforms there were all kinds of virtual communities. And all kinds of trolling, viruses, hacks, memes; everything had folded into the network, radically changing notions of representation from being seen to exposing oneself. Further on with the pervasive amount of AI in the network in the internet of things, in biomedical devices, in the environment, vast troves of data had been collected on everyone. In this new world, there was no place not to be seen. By 2010, we had all given ourselves (thousands and thousands of times over), given our every gesture and action, which continually accumulated, becoming our very “selves” and “we” were simply an interface, one of the managed masses processed by ever more complex neural networks built by computational engines. Cambridge Analytica, the data profiling consultancy that brought in the 2017 US president had more than 2000 data points for every American citizen, knowing their fears and likes, their trigger points and how to reach them. Yet, all along, we continued to expose ourselves, construct the fiction of ourselves.

If the browser was an an interface to organize, retrieve and format new media objects, now it was orchestrated to construct an image of oneself. The camera browser onto the world turned round and onto the phenomena of self exposure.



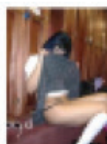


Age: 28
Location:
Ohio, United
States
Relationship
status: Busy
Here for:
Friends,
Fans,
Networking
Orientation:
Sexual
Body type:
5' 10" /
Slimish
Religion:
Other
Smoke /
Drink: No /

Age28.jpg

Alexandria

"I'm low
on gas
and you
need a
jacket..."



Female
21 years
old
Hookers,
Colorado
United
States

Alexandria.jpg

Alistair.

"...Deception
is brutal..."



Male
23 years old
Dana
Point/Los
Angeles,
California
United
States

Last Login:
6/4/2007

Alistair.jpg

ANG3I3

<3's
GRACI3!!

"Gracia
popped
my
lesbian
cherry!!
HE HE"

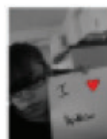
Female
19 years
old
*SA
Town*,
Texas



Ang313.jpg

Athena Peek-
A-Boo! 0_x <3
1-29-07 <3

"I walked
wit god
and i got
a scar 2
prove it...
JESUS
WALKZ
WET
ME!!...
A&A 1-
29-07 I
Love
Andrew"



Female
14 years
old
in
Andrew
Rockett
World!

Athena.jpg

Auzzy

"For Aiur
"



Male
16 years
old
Havre,
Montana
United
States

Last

Auzzy.jpg

BABY

"well fuck
me
sideways"



Female
21 years
old
London /
LA,
California
United
States

Baby.jpg

Basically♥Amazing
Pretty Dan M.A.C.
face

"Once upon a
time, there was
a boy..."

Male
19 years old
Ashland/Portland
FUCKING,
Oregon
United States



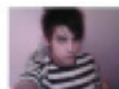
Last Login:

BasicallyAmazing.jpg

[bored-now]



Male
18 years
old
Agnostic
United
Kingdom



BoredNow.jpg

Brad

"My entire
personality
cane be
sumed up
in one
word.....
I just
havent
thought of
it yet!"



Male
15 years
old
STONY
BROOK,
NEW YORK

Brad.jpg

♣©♥♣♥♣

"broken"



Female
14 years old
Pennsylvania
United
States

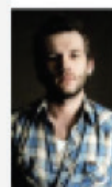
Last Login:
6/22/2007

Broken.jpg

Bryan

"I don't
give a
cunting
fuck"

Male
29 years
old
United
Kingdom



Last

Bryan.jpg

Cesar

"it takes
strength to
be gentle and
kind."

Male
22 years old
HOLLYWOOD,
California
United States



Cesar.jpg

♥_Chad{ still
has no
internet!!}_♥

"I am like a
rubix cube
the more you
play with me
the harder i
get!!!!"



Male
15 years old
KALAMAZOO,
Michigan
United
States

Chad.jpg

Chelsea's Heart Shaped Glasses

"There's the
ones that
you love,
the ones
that love
you. The
ones that
make you
come, the
ones that
make you
come
unglued."



Female
23 years old
Hollywood,
CALIFORNIA

Chelsea.jpg

Chris

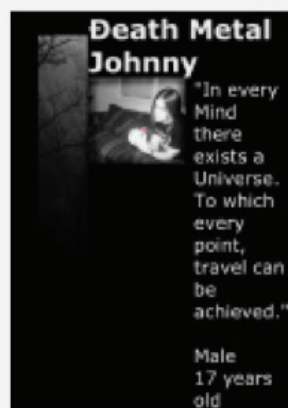
"Do
over."

Male
21 years
old
Kokomo,
Indiana
United
States

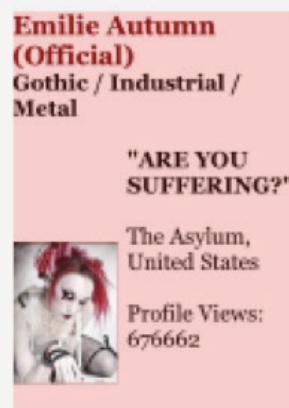


Last
Login:

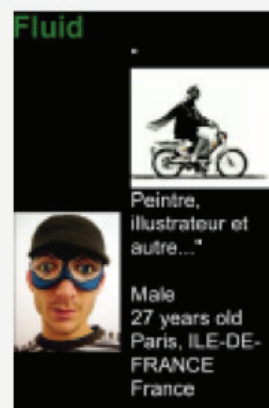
Chris.jpg



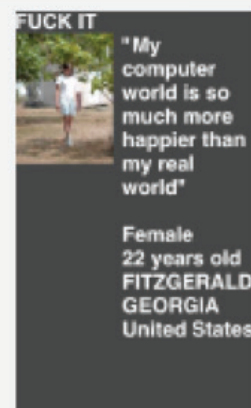
DeathMetal.jpg



EmilieAutumn.jpg



Fluid.jpg



FuckIt.jpg



HookerWaitress.jpg



I'mAlwaysTheOne.jpg



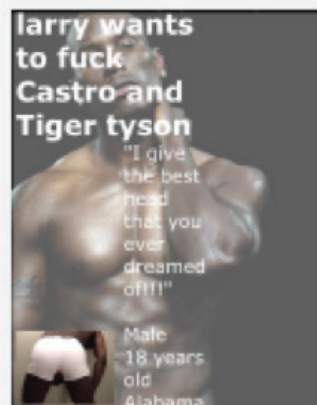
IFuckingLoveMyLife.jpg



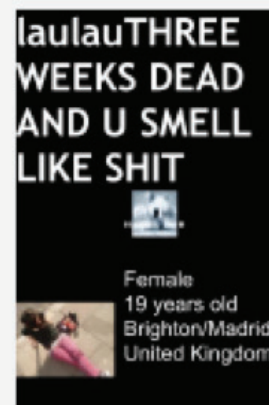
IndustrialPlayground.jpg



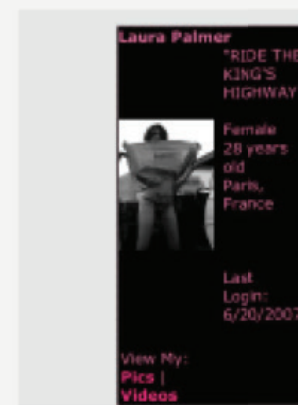
Kit.jpg



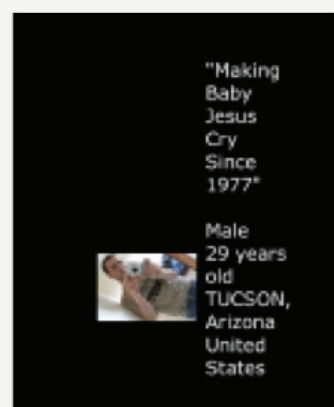
Larrywantstofuck.jpg



LauLau.jpg



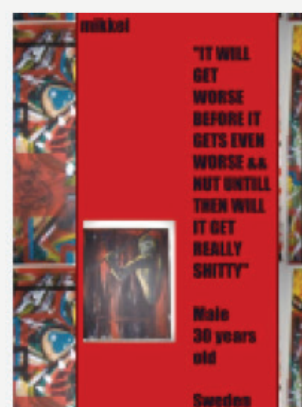
LauraPalmer.jpg



MakingBabyJ.jpg



Mattt.jpg



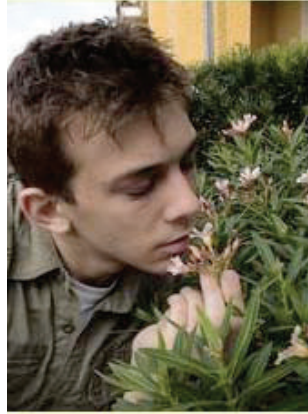
Mikkal.jpg



MysteryFlavour.jpg

♥ **Brian**

**"Semi-
Homeless
teen
looking
for
shelter
before
fully
homeless"**



**Male
20 years
old
Orlando,
Florida
United
States**

In the new cultural landscape of blogs, webcams, profiles, live journals, and videosharing sites, the intimate lives of everyday people are on parade for all to see. One could say that a new culture of erotic exposure and display is on the ascendance, fueled by the impulse to reveal the self, and streamlined by DIY media technologies. In many ways this culture would seem to be less a representational than a presentational one, where we are compelled to solicit the attention of others, act for unseen eyes, and develop new forms of connective intensity—as if this were somehow the very condition of our continued existence, the marker of our worth is our self-exposure.

The Myspace portraits of *Self-Exposures* are emblematic of sharing and erotic display, of a “pose” that functions as an attractor. As Dimitri writes, this posing is not a metamorphosis of the subject into object; it is something much more.

Now, once I feel myself observed by the lens, everything changes: I constitute myself in the process of "posing," I instantaneously make another body for myself, I transform myself in advance into an image for consumption and for pleasure. I take on the pose as my defense and assault against the many images that try and constitute me. Here in my space I am the photographer's eyes, her viewfinder, I am the object and its double, the subject that constitutes myself for its own consumption. I affirm and author myself. I arouse myself. I narrate myself. I become myself in the image. I use the tropes of the pose as a kind of carnival to myself, of myself, for myself, to supercede any possible others definition of me, to indeed define myself.

Laura Palmer

"RIDE THE KING'S HIGHWAY"



Female
28 years
old
Paris,
France

Last
Login:
6/20/2007

View My:
Pics |
Videos

8

**Chat Me Up:
This
Moment
Already
Always
Recording**

From selfie, self narration, to real time seeing, “being” with each other, negotiating the other, presenting oneself, one-to-one, open society, network photography, cinema as live recording, an encounter, intimacy of being there and not there, one’s narrative, the erotics of being seen, of presentation, representation, the performative, the global, the camera, what the network up until now has not given humanity, Brecht and the promise of radio, being one-to-one and not one-to-many, the now, not art in the age of mechanical reproduction but the performative now, seeing, being seen at the same time, the event of seeing and being seen, dressing up, bodily and not bodily, anonymity and disclosure.

In today’s networked and social media the performers and the audience are the same people. Representations become self representations, they become actions, they become the ever articulation of a “this moment.” Social media has turned what were once very private actions—sitting in front of a computer, writing and journaling—into actions that are immediately public. As such they produce and constitute both a new public, and a reconsideration of our media, our cities and spaces, our archives, of how we use, read and see representation—which is no doubt today always and already performative.

(Neshant Shah)

THE PROJECT

To investigate Chatroulette as a social medium, as a formal medium, to performatively come to it and reflect upon it.

THE RULES

To ‘meet’ 1500 people.

Never to blink anyone, that is, I never click the ‘partner’ off or channel switch them first.

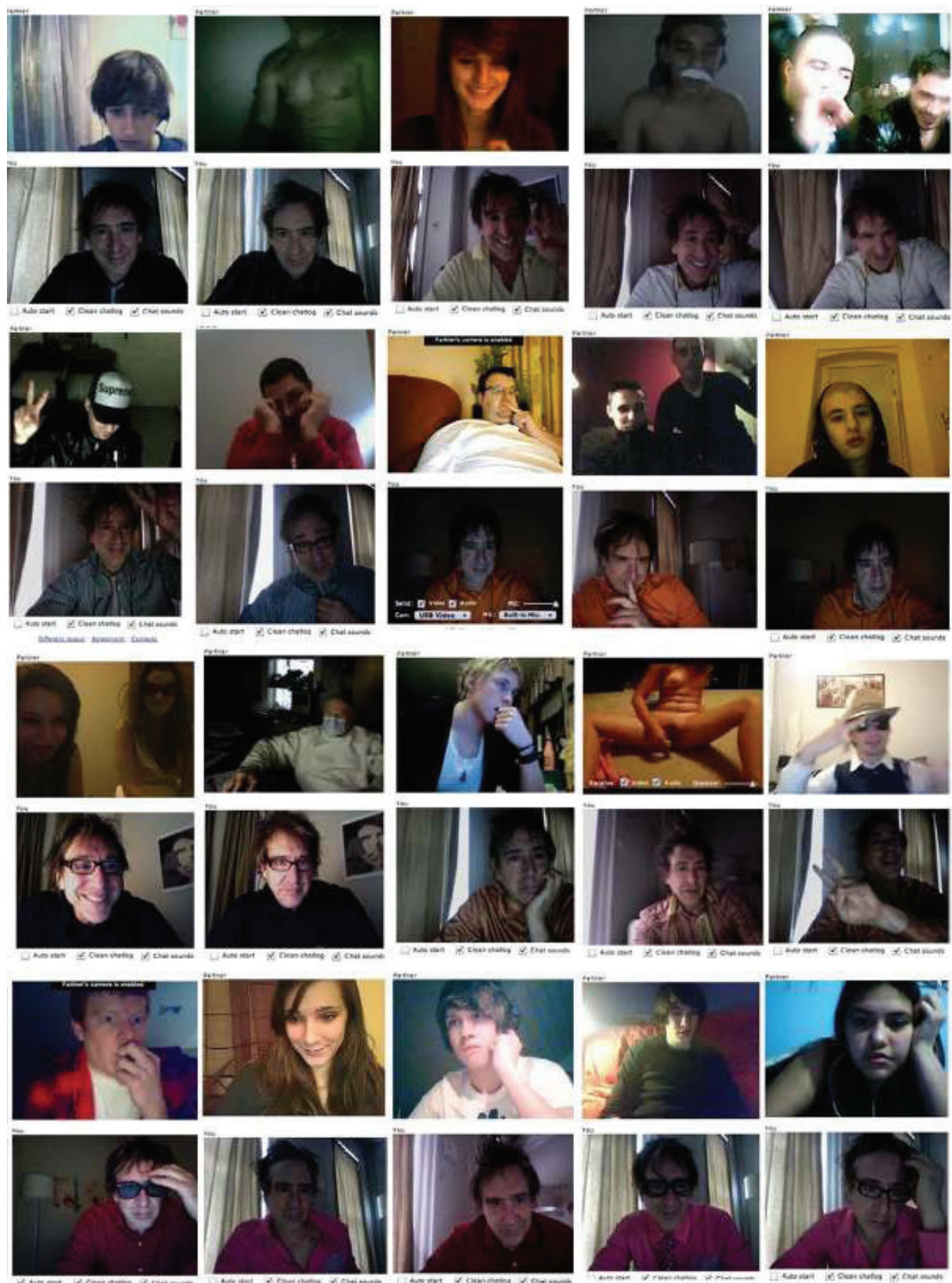
To engage in dialogue, to meet the other. no matter.

To record my honest reactions photographically while recording them.

In posting the work, never to tag it Chatroulette to keep the anonymity of the persons photographed anonymous, as much as I can (this is a difficult one).

To write about the experience and create conversation about it to understand its current social reading and its possible reading.





THE WORK

*The photographs.
Which put forward not a screen grab but a new photographic
practice.*

Certain thoughts come to mind about performance, cinema and photographic practice in the realm of our networked condition.

Filmmakers and photographers have given us access, insight and images from places and peoples we had not seen (scene). They brought to us worlds only they could access, often very intimate worlds. They narrativized both these worlds and (at times self-critically) their own intervention of recording.

These include subcultures of cities and suburbs, all kinds of groups, peoples and places from all over the world, and with them stories and situations were brought to us through photography and film.

In the one-to-one, to anyone, video recording of Chatroulette one is put into any number of stories or encounters with people we may have seen in a Todd Solondz film, a Nan Goldin, Larry Clark, or Alex Soth photograph, the *Harold and Kumar* films, the Sacha Baron Cohen films, these being road trip, documentary and performative films. These works are pre-recorded events, linear events whose narratives may be open, but whose events are “closed.”

The always-on camera, as both an event to present oneself and to encounter any possible image or representation of others, in the Chatroulette network is open. It takes us to this place of always already recorded, always to be recorded—and so, what is it to make an image, still or moving, when one always is or has a camera? If we live within cinema and cinema does not stand outside us, what is it to always be recorded? Of course, cinema and photography is not simply recording, but intent and arrangement of recordings and the recording event.

But if cinema once gave us narrative closure and photography remove and intimacy of and from a distant, an event, the always-on, both to see and be seen, networked video gives us this realm in which we are always-on in cinema and within photography. These are prosthetic and prosaic ways of seeing and performing ourselves. And not just seeing, but encountering, discovering and always, while seeing, being seen.

*The photographs document this encounter, this new way to image
and be seen
A way to perform to perform the self.*

Perhaps all media today is social and is the long played out and realized desire conceptualized by Nicolas Bourriaud in his idea of relational aesthetics, “a set of artistic practices which take as their theoretical and practical point of departure the whole of human relations and their social context, rather than an independent and private space.”

Social media not only presents us with a new kind of public space, it presents what was once a spectacle, where the dividing line between performers and the audience was very clear, with new modes of going, new modes of discourse, of writing and image making, where traditional representations are contested, becoming an intertwining of roles, of acts being performed and the consumption of that performance.

Going forward, these actions, this performative, which in this first phase had been ends to themselves, now demand and question, to what end—in other words, putting on the now, putting on the media, putting on the institution, situating it, making it visible, even for a moment asks something else of us. In these and following works using social media as a context and medium, such questions are put forward. As artworks they address questions as to the act of photography, what is and where is performance space, public space, institutional space. It presents portraiture photography as imaging the photographer and the subject at the same time. Performance as relational performance.

9

Revolution of Everyday Life

In networked society, where we are each a spectacle for ourselves and others and live within recordings and the perpetual now, can ever more recording become an antidote, a homeopath to the spectacle to itself... or will we simply exhume and exhaust ourselves in recording?

What happens when you turn the camera on and speak to it, perform for it, let it observe you? When you use it as a way to say things about yourself. In *Revolution of Everyday Life* (2011), the question is how do we come to know ourselves and how to live in the world. I got to a certain point with *Revolution* where I could sense to know the actors intimately and, more so, to have them reveal themselves to me, to themselves, to the work, intimately, I'd have to ask them to record themselves alone, privately. When I brought this up with them, I was surprised how keen they were to do this. So week to week I gave out several flip cameras and asked them to make recordings of themselves, there were specific instructions that came from performance and video art of allowing them to be simply a body in space, for them to have no fear of the mundane, to just be. Which is not easy.



MARC LAFIA

DIRECTOR

"Film is always a possibility in front of us. This excitement of its possibility, of a becoming cinema, for the viewer and creator is the experience"

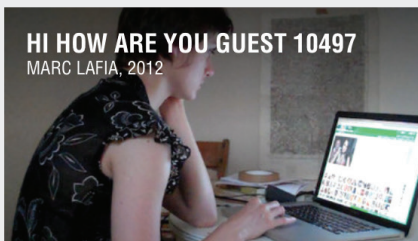


DIRECTOR 5

LISTS 20



DIRECTOR



HI HOW ARE YOU GUEST 10497
MARC LAFIA, 2012



REVOLUTION OF EVERYDAY LIFE
MARC LAFIA, 2010



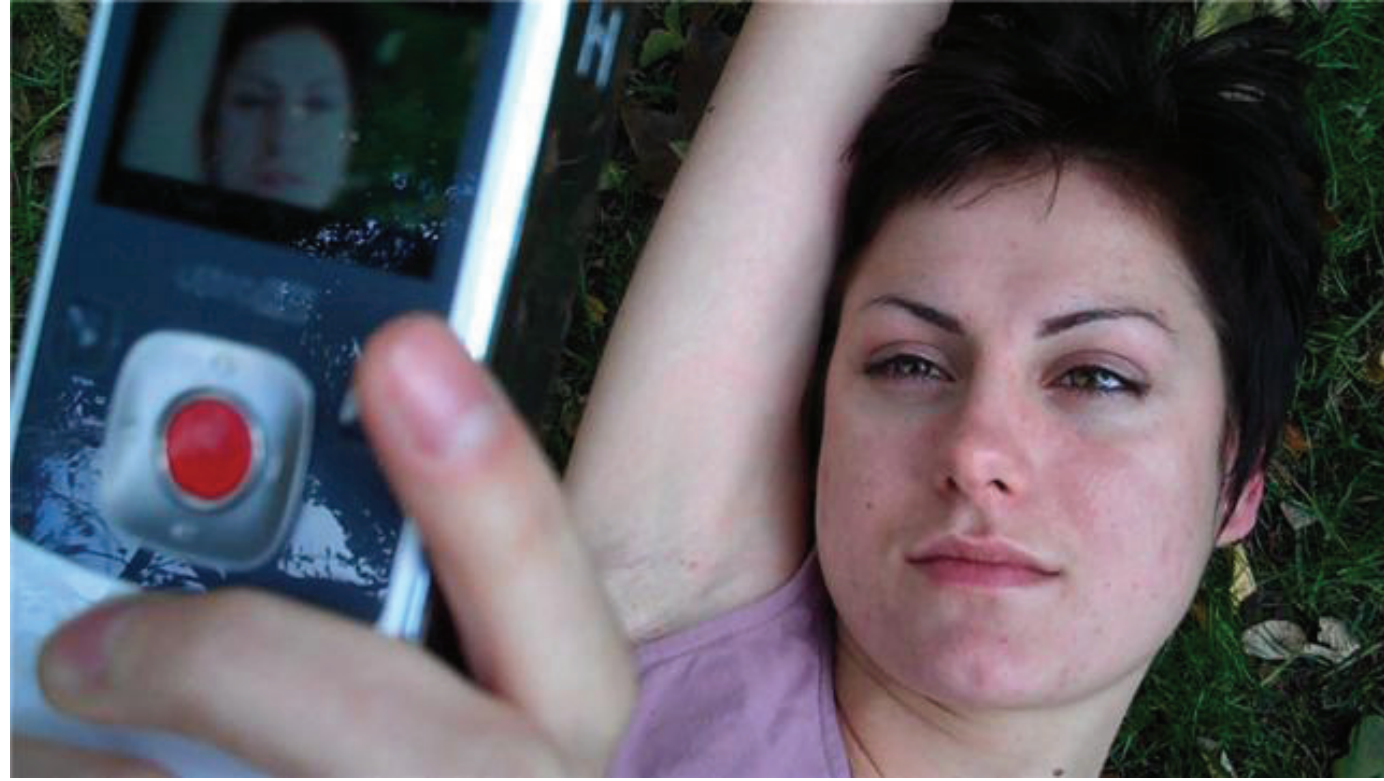
PARADISE
MARC LAFIA, 2010

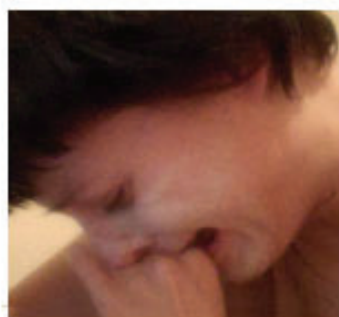
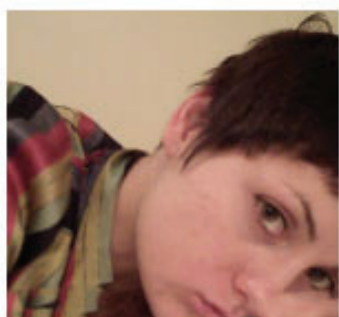
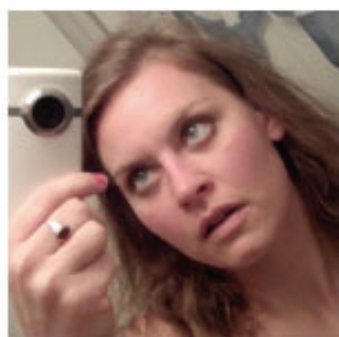
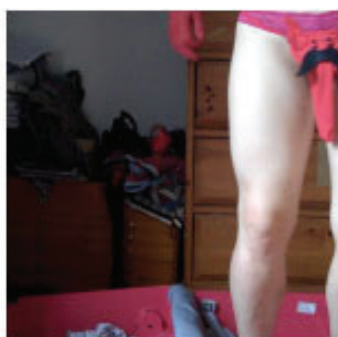
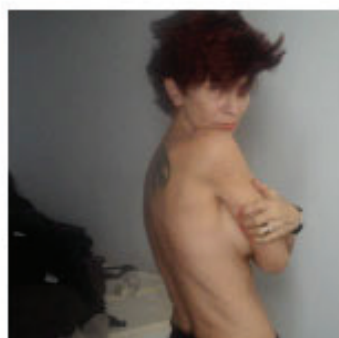
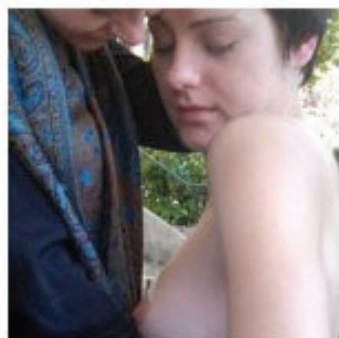


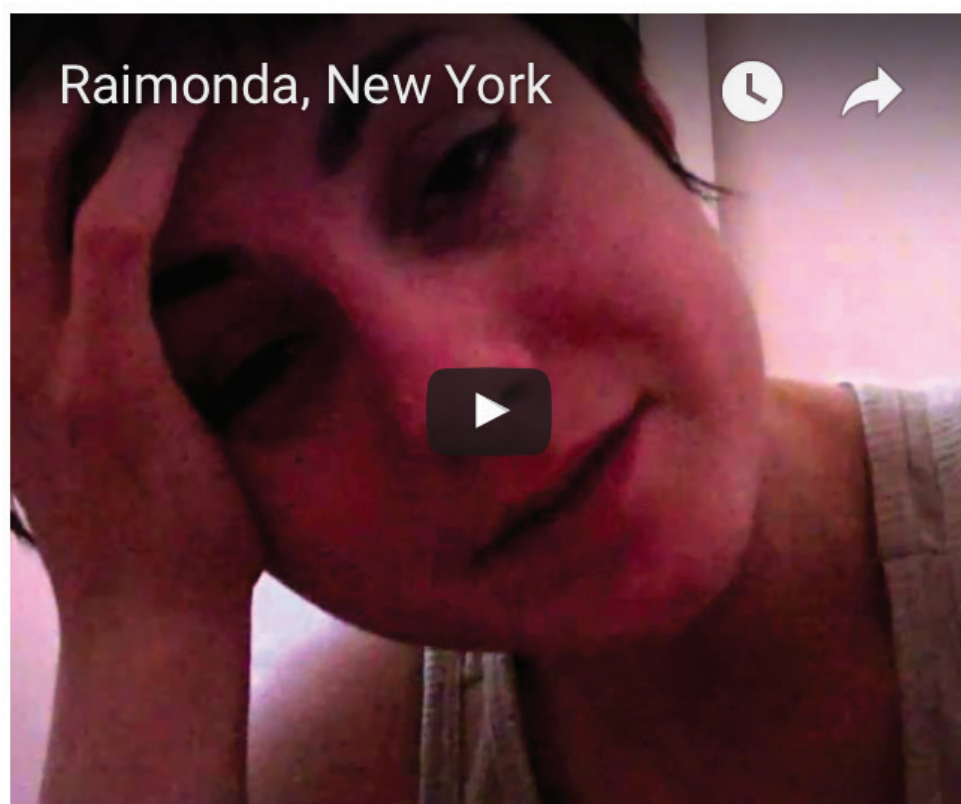
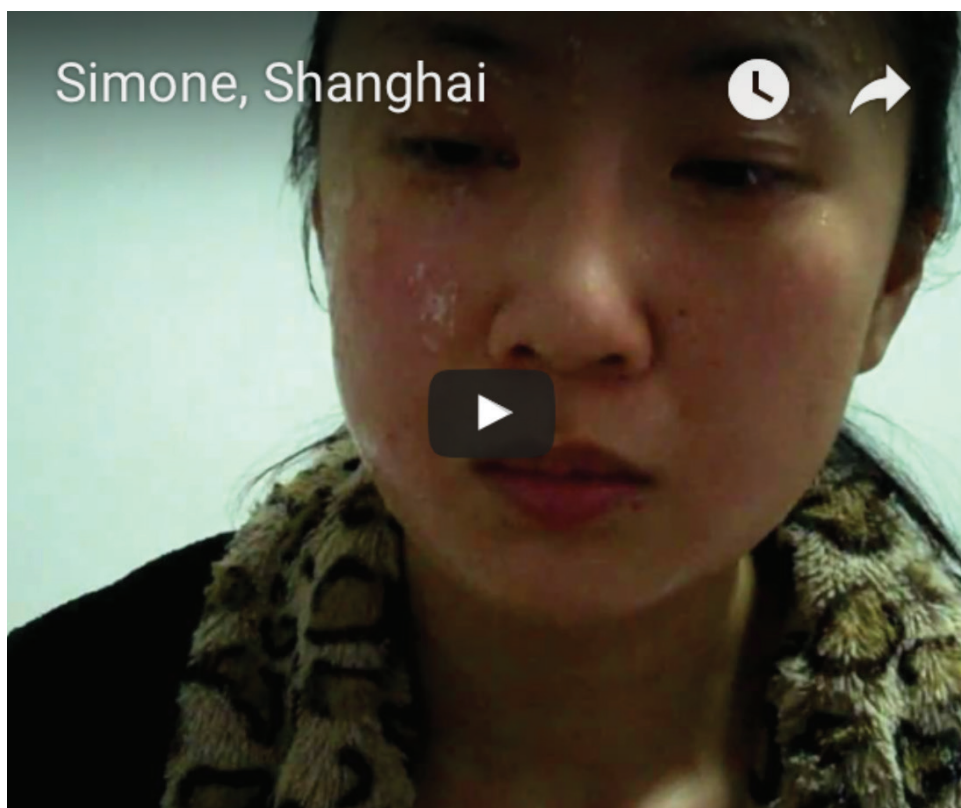
LOVE AND ART
MARC LAFIA, 2009



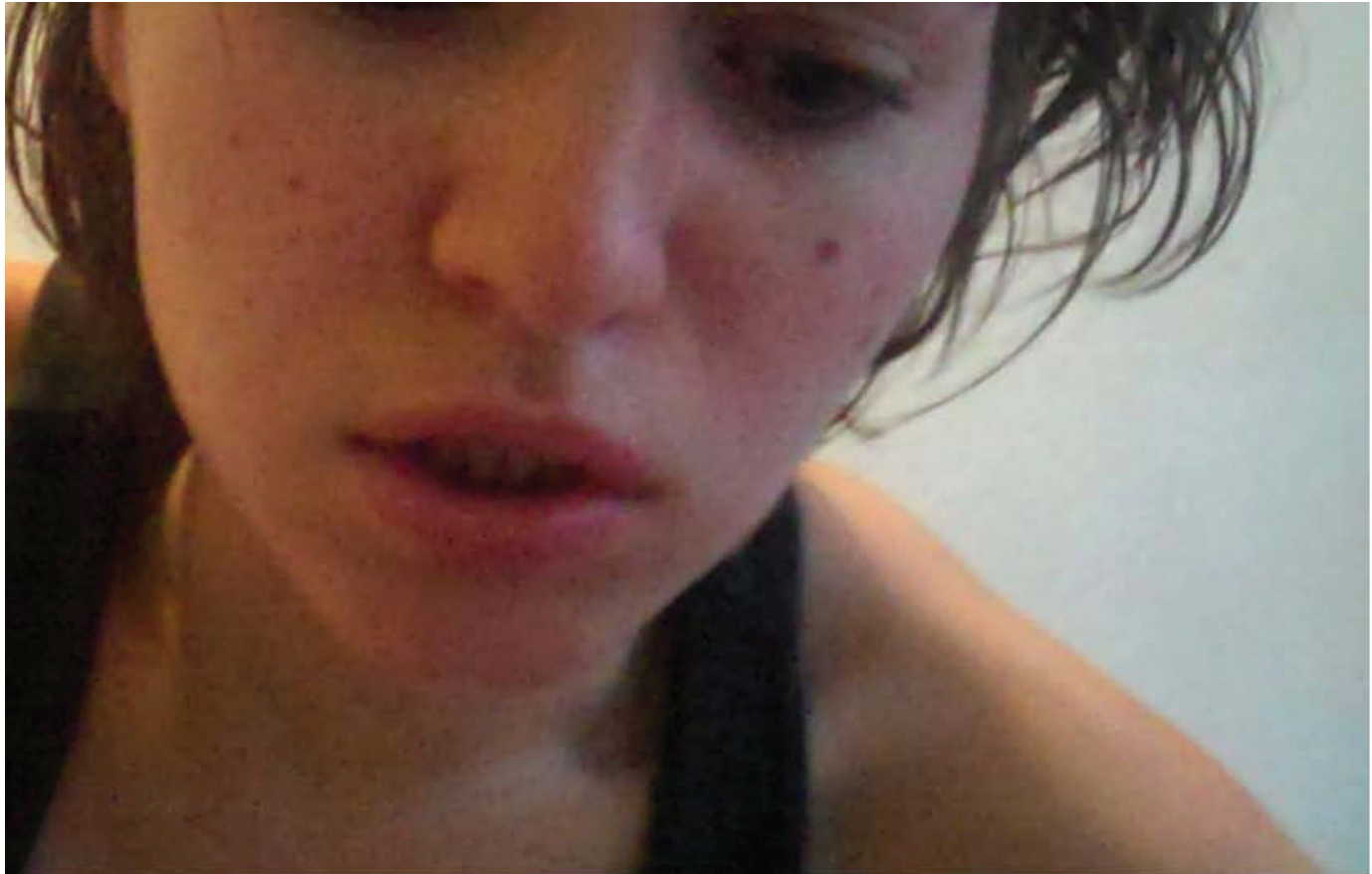
EXPLODING OEDIPUS
MARC LAFIA, 2001











It is this larger sense of cinema and how it has evolved that we look to find in our cineastes.

HiTjasa - You lead a group whose ideology revolves around constant self-criticism and reflection. Please see this video of Jonathan Meese

Now, alone, we do certain things that heal us.

Yet we need each other to push at ourselves, know and question ourselves, to enact our fears and desires. And this was the second part of the film.

Cinema is no longer monumental. Despite the best efforts of Hollywood, making a film no longer demands millions of dollars, booms, grips, lights, and cameras. We don't need theaters. We don't need studios. All we need is a mobile phone. Cinema has become everyday.

Marc Lafia has taken to making films that embrace the everyday cinema machine. He has an idea; puts together a cast (he has started working with the same actors); and films on the streets of New York with digital cameras. In his latest, *The Revolution of Everyday Life*, he gives HD Flip video cameras to the cast and has them film themselves alone.

For Lafia, this process is not an inexpensive way to make a so-called indie film with its quirky characters and narratives of redemption. This is not mumblecore. Nor is it *The Blair Witch Project* or *Mean Streets*. For Lafia, the everyday tools of cinema breed an emergent cinema, a cinema of the event, in which the very act of recording creates something new.

The camera in this digital age—and in the hands of Lafia—is not a means of mediating an encounter. On the contrary, the camera forges the encounter. The camera here is not as much a recording device per se as it is what Burroughs and Gysin call the Third Mind—an active perceptive engine that functions between and amongst all participants, that thrives in the very event of seeing and being seen.

Throughout *The Revolution of Everyday Life*, we encounter scenes—or, better, we encounter encounters—that have only come into being because the camera was present. We see sense emerging. We see faces and people and love and the social emerge not just in front of the camera but with the camera. In the exquisite scenes of the women alone recording themselves—scenes that are private, exhuming, creative, peculiar—we come to understand that the camera is a presence, a kind of face that grasps and inspires. The recording event—which, in this digital world, is a playback event, as well—does not just record: it creates events.

The Revolution of Everyday Life reckons the very nature, the possibility, of this cinematic event. Look at the achingly gorgeous scene of Lizzie alone with her camera, filming herself in the mirror. There is a breathtaking intimacy here, an intimacy that would be impossible without the camera, that could never happen without the act of recording. The film then cuts to Tjasa standing on the street, a dildo strapped to her skirt, haranguing passers by.

The film seems, then, to move from the private to the public. But this distinction is false. After all, the so-called private scene of Lizzie is not just a recording but a broadcasting, her room and tears and body on display. In fact, rather than reifying a public-private dichotomy, *The Revolution of Everyday Life* works to erase it. The boundary that would keep our private and public worlds distinct has been superseded by the pervasive cinema engine.

The distinction the film draws is not between public and private but between demanding to be seen and allowing oneself to be seen. On the one hand, there's Tjasa who imagines herself a radical fomenting change through situationist performances. Tjasa demands to be seen, screeching into the camera just as she screeches at others, to no one and everyone. Meanwhile, Lizzie, her lover, avoids the spotlight but finds a much more intimate relationship with the camera and with being seen. In a gesture of infinite generosity, she allows herself to be seen.

This is not simply a dichotomy of real events vs. recorded events, the street vs. the bedroom the public vs. the private. Both events are recorded; both events are image, are cinema. No, in these two modes we get postures of standing towards perception, postures of being seen. We get an ethics (mercifully bereft of judgment).

But *Revolution of Everyday Life* is not about the cinema event. It is a cinema event. The process of making the film and the film are so thoroughly intertwined it is often difficult to distinguish one from the other. But not through reflexivity—we don't see booms entering the frame. Rather, we encounter a film in the process of making itself, characters in the process of making themselves to a point where we're not even sure if they are characters. They exist in a state of person-becoming, character-becoming, actor-becoming just as the film flourishes in the space of cinema-becoming. Events are at once real and not, recorded and live simultaneously.

Revolution of Everyday Life hence breaks down the rigid lines that separate creation from playback, writing from reading, and finally subject from object. The pervasive cinema engine, the everyday cinema engine, not only rewrites cinema: it rewrites the private and the social, the very manner in which we present and are presented to the world.

In the contemporary world of pervasive cinema, we present ourselves as something to be seen, something always already seen, always already being seen. And yet we do so without evacuating our individuality. We are turned inside out, splayed, but not eviscerated. On the contrary, we are multiplied, extended, disseminated, and proliferated.

And this, alas, foments the revolution of everyday life. The title is taken from the English translation of Raoul Vaneigem's great situationist treatise by the same title. The revolution, then, is not Tjasa's ranting against capitalism. Nor is it her all-too-familiar spectacles of S&M. The revolution of everyday life is the proliferation of cinema within and through the everyday.

If we live in a society of the spectacle, this everyday cinema decenters image production, proliferates centers, shatters the hegemony of the corporation's will to quantity and uniformity. This pervasiveness of cinema—this ability to create, distribute, and screen on demand—fundamentally shifts flows of communication, introducing radical new possibilities of constituting the social. Images no longer solely flow downhill or in a straight linear line. They are no longer solely created by vast corporations and streamed into our houses. Images now flow every which way—up, down, sideways, diagonally—disrupting the painful banality of narrative, character and cliché.

As cinema takes up the everyday, it infuses life and is in turn infused. Engaging this everyday cinema engine, Lafia gives us a living cinema, a live cinema, a cinema that is always (and already) in the process of making itself, a cinema replete with affect, with the impossible complexity of the human: a cinema that is revolutionary.

(Daniel Coffeen, <http://hilariousbookbinder.blogspot.sg/2010/09/cinema-of-event-on-marc-lafias.html>)

Watching *The Baader Meinhof Complex* last night, the film captures really well the winds of change that spread across US and Europe in the late 60's, young, sexy liberated people making a change by taking action at all cause, fight fire with fire. What happened today two generation after, we vote in Facebook how much we are against the american occupation in Iraq, Israel, Ahmadinejad and all the other evil forces that are behind the destruction of progress, but, how exactly that helps? the man on the street become smaller and smaller, we went back to the time in history when giants ruled the land, China, America, Europe, Iran, they are all giants, people do not want to take action because it is obvious they are going to lose. It is not an argument between ideologies, perspectives, way of seeing the world, we now don't want to hold any certain ideology because they all failed, it is all transparent now, humans are destructive creatures. Going to the revolution of everyday life, the film tries to offer an alternative to the problem of the impotency we all in: to go back and become animals, monkeys, lions, swans, start again, recapture the moments of real existence. two woman love, fuck, hate, beat, shout, cry with no social context, why? to make sense of it all, shameless creatures who can't handle it all anymore, this is their protest, this is what maybe we all should do, but we probably not unless we are true to our self or just crazy.

(Lior Rosenfeld, May 13, 2010)

10

**Here
and
Somewhere
Else,
Shanghai
Kids**

To create a performative document of select students from the Shanghai Theatre Academy:

Art as Reading

- art a touching
- art as sense
- actively reading the world
- deforming it
- putting on the world
- remixing
- seeing
- remake unmake
- history paintings
- visually similar results

To observe them through both the staging of certain photographs from pictures of photography, fashion, painting, cinema, reportage and through the photographic documentation of them in the activity of performing for these photographs.

In the time spent together, the staging of the photographs are not re-enactments of the images they are presented with, but enactments of themselves through the opportunity the pictures afford.

Students are in the present but anxious about the future. yet what the photographs show us is how present they are to the camera, the act of photography. seeing themselves photographed. Both the images they are presented and photography itself sets a stage to act, and so the students enact actions, feelings often withheld or below the surface.

It is hoped that this method will create a multivalent document of the students and the reading/misreading of them will exceed itself and produce something more than the artist or students are able to see—that is, we will only see something in the exhibition of select photographs taken during the 3 days spent together.

The title *Here and Elsewhere* has multiple meanings, referring to both the *here* of the photograph and the *elsewhere* it refers to, the *elsewhere* that also allows us to see *here*, and the *elsewhere* that takes us away from the *here* so in a sense we are neither *here* nor *somewhere else* but between both.

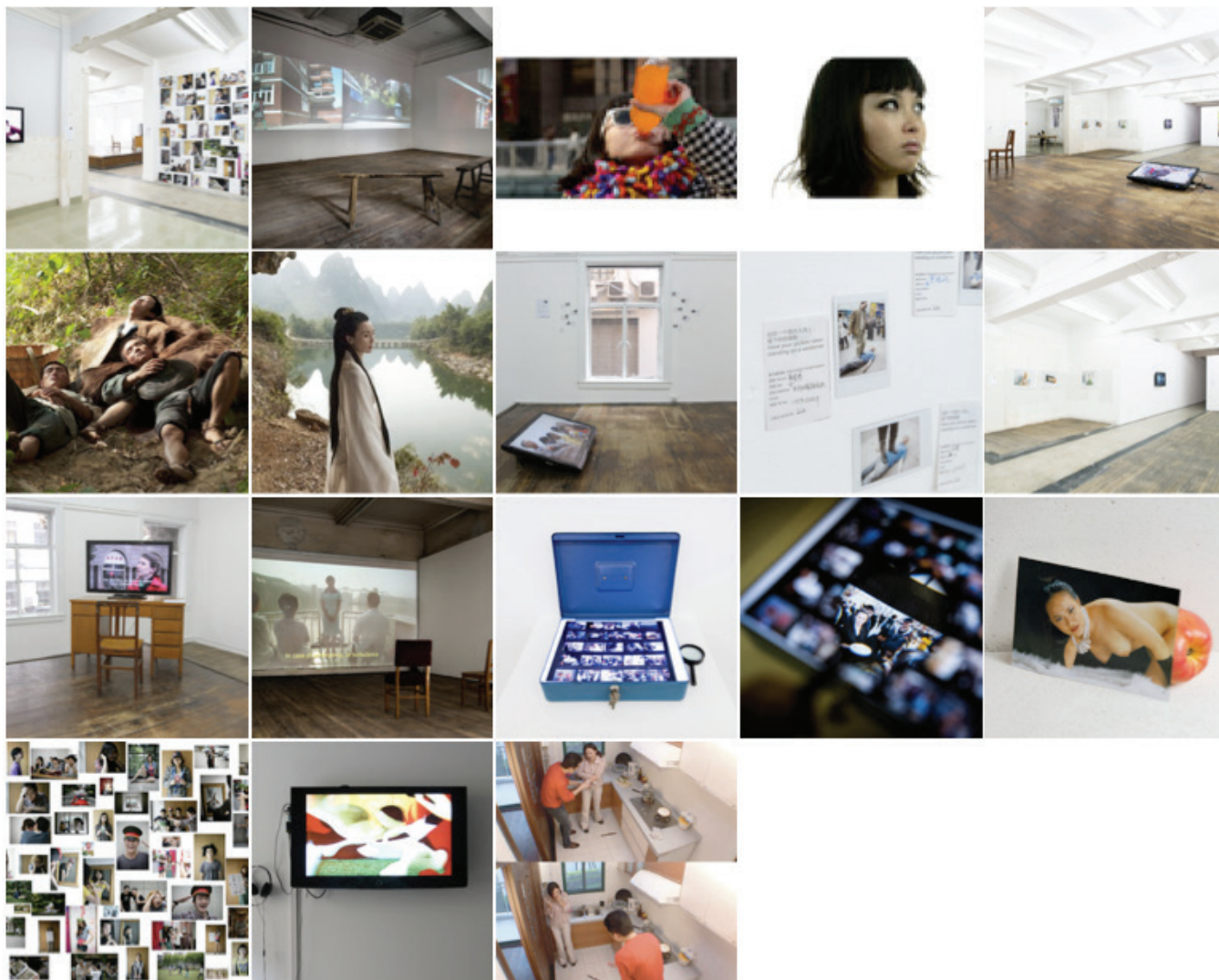
Staging the Photograph

I want to perform recording, I want to see recording, consider the film script as instructions for a recording event.

When shooting you are recording the event of recording.

In post production you are re-recording.

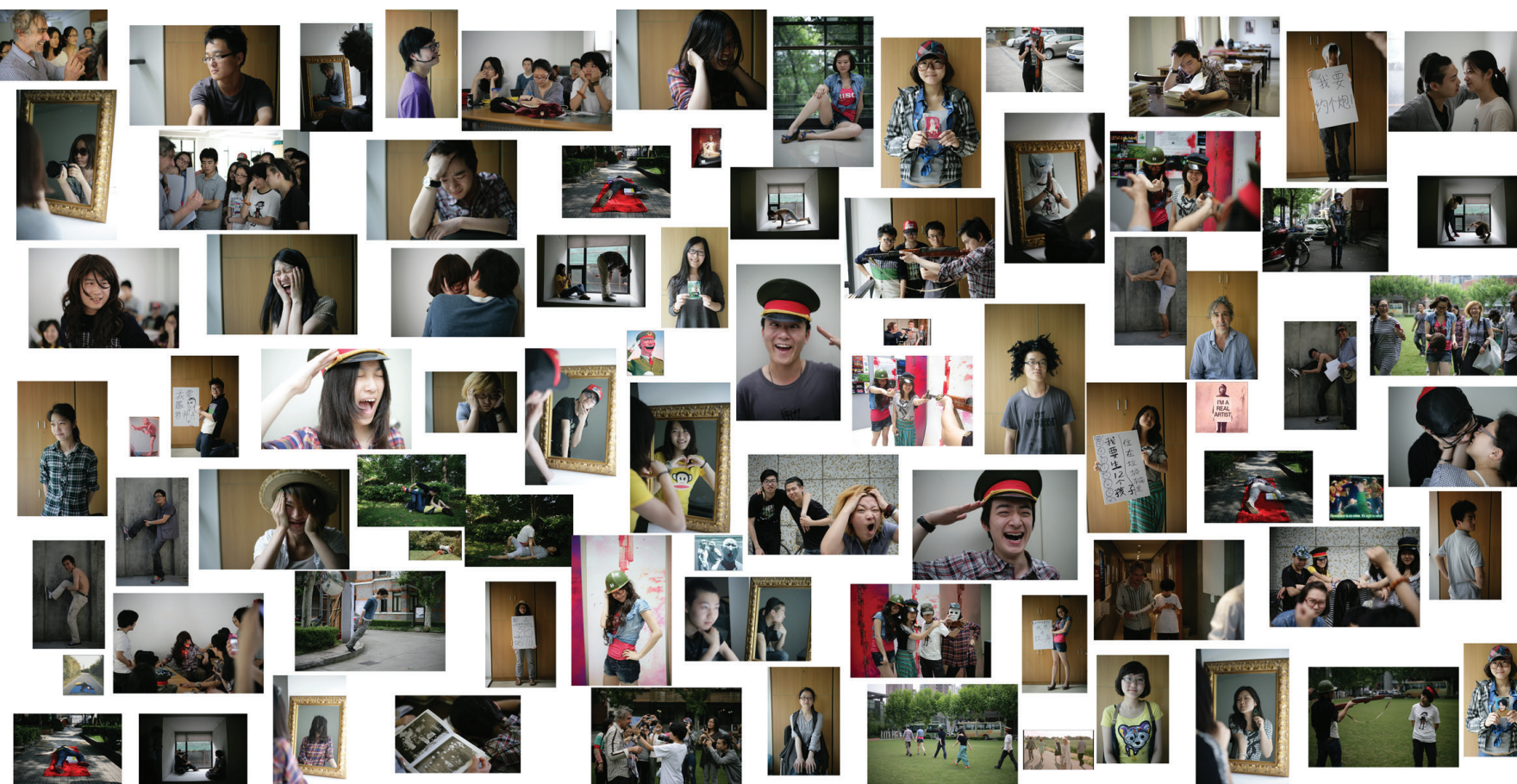
The situation of recording is in fact what is recorded.



LAOWAI, Allegorist - Antagonist
2013.07.09-13
BANK
59 Xianqiao Road. 1F







Shanghai Kids:

archive fever and the cultural imaginary

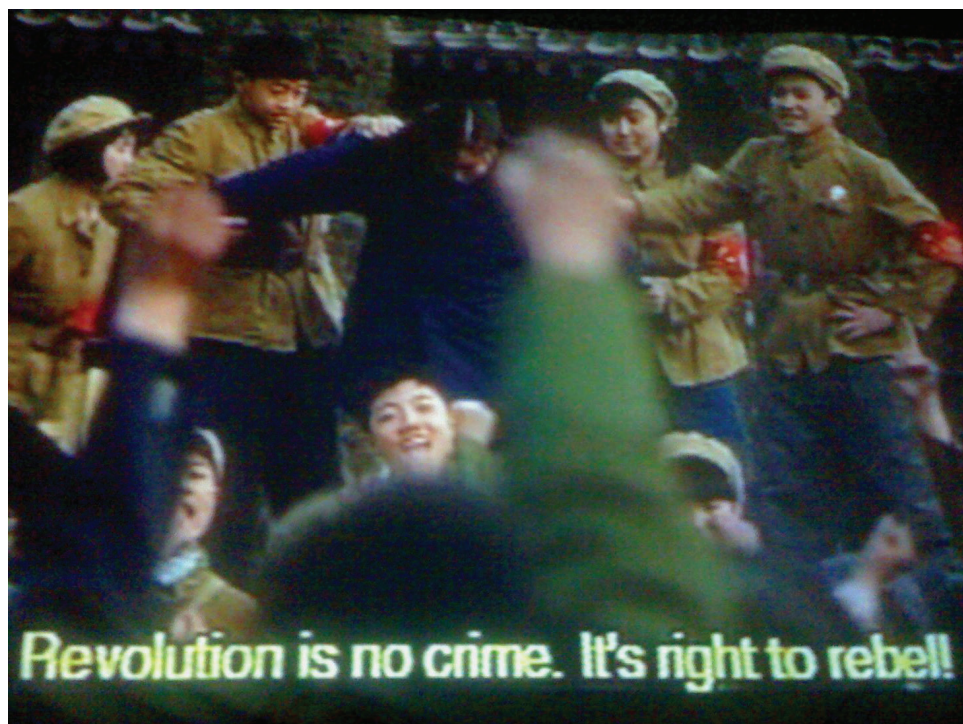
When you look at contemporary art, you see that many artists start as collectors of images, news, celebrity, pornography, fashion, documentary, illustrations—I want to talk today about the artist as collector of the image, but not just ordinary images, rather the *right* image. But let me be clear from the outset: it is not just the image, but the image under the eye and through the process of the artist that the artist sees. Take these examples: Richard Prince sees not the Marlboro man but a Western cowboy; Gerhard Richter sees not the Baader-Meinhof gang but the erasure of this painful German period as the erasure of memory and the photographic image; Cindy Sherman, in the images she finds, sees herself in the image, enacting that person, the particular becoming archetypal; Mike Kelley used photographs of various initiation rituals found in high school yearbooks to create video plays; Zhou Teihai, when he saw Joe Camel, saw it as a way to read America, the West, portraiture painting. Each of these artists saw images we all see, but saw them in a unique way that allowed them to take possession of them. But let's not get ahead of ourselves; let's start first with the archive and seeing.

Before the Internet, artists would scour magazines, bookshops, libraries, memorabilia stores, museums, pornography shops, advertisements, television, record covers, comic books, police forensic images, medical records—all manner of visual records of all manner of visual instruments. After all, each visual instrument produced a particular vantage point, texture, record, recording. Think for a moment only of Google Images, the odd angles and moments that the Google camera car produces, or even the Instagram camera, any number of filters or apps used now with our phones; this is to say that each recording instrument produces a particular recording. Equally, each recording event has a social and material context, a form and set of protocols that shape such recordings.

The artist reads these recordings and sees in them another.

What I would like to do is spend time with you looking at a number of contemporary art works and talk to you about what the artist is seeing—more particularly, how and through what lens the artist is constructing the work that is, in a sense, something already seen, but something, as the writer William Burroughs says, that produces a surprised recognition. What does he mean by that? He means you have already seen the image. This is why you recognize it; but equally, you are surprised because you haven't. Hence, the image archive re-made, re-thought.















11

Being
Art

When I travel, I always want to see architecture, gardens, paintings, fountains, sculptures, galleries, plazas, churches, temples, museums, monasteries, fairs, biennales, installations, boulevards, small streets, happenings, and of course the cinema, theatre, food, and more. But I don't just want to see. I want in some way to experience and converse with this art. I want to touch and interact with it with all my senses. Over time, traveling with my family took on a special and playful pleasure, as we all came to enjoy being with art, being together in the experience of it. I will admit carrying forth at times with much exuberant discourse about what this incredible thing we were experiencing was, now, right in front of us, and that it connected, if you remember group, to what we had seen last year and that brings us to this other work and style, and certain continuities and discontinuities in style and on and on. That pleasure of reading something across time, style and culture has always excited me. But here in these pictures that follow, you can sense another kind of reading and being with art, one that goes with the work immediately, sensually, senses it, converses with it, caresses it and confronts it, saying I'll go with you, I feel you. Over time this mode of performative interaction became a way for us, together, to go with the work of art and to not only share and communicate with each other our pleasure of it, but by going with the work, to create a new kind of pleasure, an assemblage of pleasure, that is the work and us.

*I am beauty, history, present, being,
emerging already,
here, always here, already. I see, her,
venus, seeing me, me seeing the cameras
seeing me. My glasses, her shell,
my shield, stand, see her, you, seeing
her, seeing me, as she sees us, i see you.
I am image, to be imaged, covering
myself like her.*



Gilbert & George **SCAPEGOATING PICTURES**

"...Not a style, but a Principle."

A.W.N. Pugin (1841)

"Man is least himself when he talks in his own person. Give him a mask, and he will tell you the truth."

Oscar Wilde (1891)

For nearly five decades the art of Gilbert & George has created a visceral and epic depiction of modern urban existence. At its centre are always the artists themselves, who have dedicated their adult lives to their calling as 'Living Sculptures' – witness participants within the moral and vividly atmospheric world of their vision, as it is revealed in their art.

The **SCAPEGOATING PICTURES** unflinchingly describe the volatile, tense, accelerated and mysterious reality of our increasingly technological, multi-faith and multi-cultural world. It is a world in which paranoia, fundamentalism, surveillance, religion, accusation and victimhood become moral shades of the city's temper. Gilbert & George take their place in these **SCAPEGOATING PICTURES** as shattered and spirit-like forms – at times masked, at times as grotesquely capering skeletons, at times dead-eyed and impassive. These **SCAPEGOATING PICTURES** consolidate and advance the art of Gilbert & George as a view of modern humanity that is at once libertarian and free-thinking, opposed to bigotry of all forms and dedicated to secular realism.

Dominating the **SCAPEGOATING PICTURES**, becoming almost the imagistic signature of this vast group of pictures, are images of the sinister bonfire-burned canisters used to contain nitrous oxide, also known as "whippets" and "hippy crack", occasionally inhaled to induce euphoria, hallucinations and uncontrollable laughter. Given the artists on their early morning walks from the side streets and back alleys that surround their home, the presence of these canisters, mimicking that of "bombs" pervades the **SCAPEGOATING PICTURES** to infer terrorism, warfare and a stark industrial reality.

Echoing the maxim of the great Victorian architect A.W.N. Pugin, "Not a Style, but a Principle", the vision of the **SCAPEGOATING PICTURES** confirms and intensifies the historically iconic art of Gilbert & George, in its tireless and profound engagement with the viewer and the modern world.

Michael Bracewell 2014



Niki de Saint Phalle

Côte d'Azur, France









12

Instructions

Over time, my interests become instructions and the various apparatuses that put them forward. Setting up an envelope of possibilities. instructions put forward procedures to explore a possibility space, instances, protocols and procedures, are in themselves technical instruments that exponentially scale up in a networked and computational culture.

It is not a question of such works being open to interpretation, which these are, but rather open in iteration, open in how they become, such works are always becoming.

The consequences of this are innumerable, impacting collectors, museums, curators, and of course artists, musicians, architects, and numerous cultural producers. Such works exist in real time, in a continual presence. They are iterative machines.

To understand this further, imagine not only writing a new score for an orchestra, but writing new instruments for the orchestra as well. Such a new coded orchestration is not self sustaining or self executable but relies on an ecosystem of code, protocol and machines that sustain them.

The dilemma of museums and other cultural institutions stems from the fact that culture is such an isolated field, and that art is even more isolated: an ivory tower in the field of culture surrounded first by the whole complex of culture and education, and then by the media which are also part of culture. We have a restricted idea of culture which debases everything; and it is the debased concept of art that has forced museums into their present weak and isolated position. Our concept of art must be universal and have the interdisciplinary nature of a university, and there must be a university department with a new concept of art and science".

Joseph Beuys 1979, From an interview with Frans Hak

In the world of art, instructions coming out of conceptual art and avant-garde music is not at all new. Think only of Sol Lewitt, Yoko Ono, Le Monte Young, Boulez onto Sophie Calle, Vito Acconci, Oulipo, each working with prescribed sets of constraints. These artists worked with algorithms and instructions prior to our world of software and computation, which of course amplifies and takes further instructions.

We live within instructions, coming to us all the time over networks and their codes, within the software protocols that overlay our environment, let alone all the legal and civil codes, restraints and processes which order the everyday. Such things tend to go into the background until, of course, something goes wrong, like planes disappearing in the skies, or cops killing too many people, or diseases crossing borders, or when networks are compromised and we learn we've been listening in on the phone calls of the German Prime Minister.

I always intensely feel such protocols when I travel and I have to go through security, when my person is subject to search. At that moment, what's in the background, but ever present in civil society, is made clear. We are bodies in a social order within which protocols manage and control us. Those of you who

are New Yorkers know this in that over the last ten years, anyone riding the subway is subject to being searched without warrant or reason. I want to see instructions as a beginning to better see the complexity of various ordering and emerging systems that make us who we are. Such instructions both constrain possibilities and enable them. That's the fun in modeling a system. And today, pricing, policing, monitoring, the adverts you receive, traffic and money flows are adapting in real time. And that space is a very interesting one. Models, limits, rules, parameters, series, instructions are very familiar to artists.

Below is a picture from a class I taught at the San Francisco Art Institute where I asked students to make three works from the pages of the class syllabus; a performance, an installation and an object. When I asked them this, they were quite startled and taken aback, but soon took to the idea of this limit. Yes, no other materials but the simple sheets of paper in their syllabus. That's it. All of us would then use the same underlying materials, these sheets of paper. Soon, they went from feeling dismayed and limited to very intrigued by this limit. A limit that opened possibilities and in the best sense precluded so many others. Their work would be generated now from these limits with the material of paper, the paper of their class readings. Limits that bounded them but which were infinite and unknown.

In the first picture, a student cut out various texts from the readings and placed them on the floor as a kind of very minimal sculpture:



Art and Instructions
Instructions give constraints and limits creating possibilities.

Artist
Marc Lafia

Categories
no movements

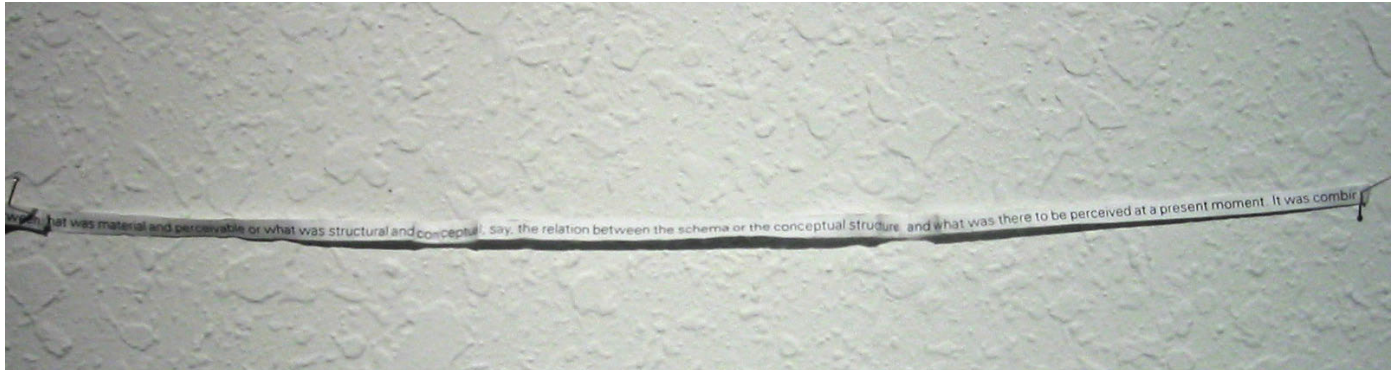
Themes
serial, playful, whimsical,
experimental,
monumental, and
layered

Another student taped down pages of one of the essays into a square on the floor, sat down and shaved his head:



Very quickly, the students realized how much they could do with the same underlying materials, simply the paper of the eight readings, and found it liberating. And using all the same materials, they could see how the same materials could yield so many different results.

Here, a student cuts up words from the underlying text of a reading assignment, rearranging them to make new sentences and a kind of ephemeral sculpture.





I was teaching a class at Stanford in a very similar room and I asked the students to rearrange the classroom each time before class.



Much of what I have shared with you are actions that are repeatable and scalable and produce new social spatial relations.

Difference and Repetition

With the above examples, you begin to get a sense of the scalability of instructions and, with that, variability. Different but not the same. Difference and repetition, seemingly contradictory. What gives? I looked this up on Google and came to an article by a very good friend of mine, Daniel Coffeen, “Some of My Favorite Concepts: Repetition via Deleuze”:

When I first read *Difference and Repetition*—I dunno, 17 years ago—I was so thoroughly confused I could not speak, read, or write for a year. But once I enjoyed a glimpse of comprehension, everything—and I mean everything—changed. Repetition is the defining concept of my adult intellectual life to date. Which is what Kierkegaard claims repetition is: to be born again and anew—an impossible, yet actual, undertaking.

For Deleuze, repetition allows us to think the relationship between sameness and difference without making one the derivative or disruptor of the other. That is, on the one hand we can say that I am a fixed self and all the different moments of me are accidental. Or I can say that all these moments are each a different me and hence there is no me per se: I am shattered and therefore there is no I.

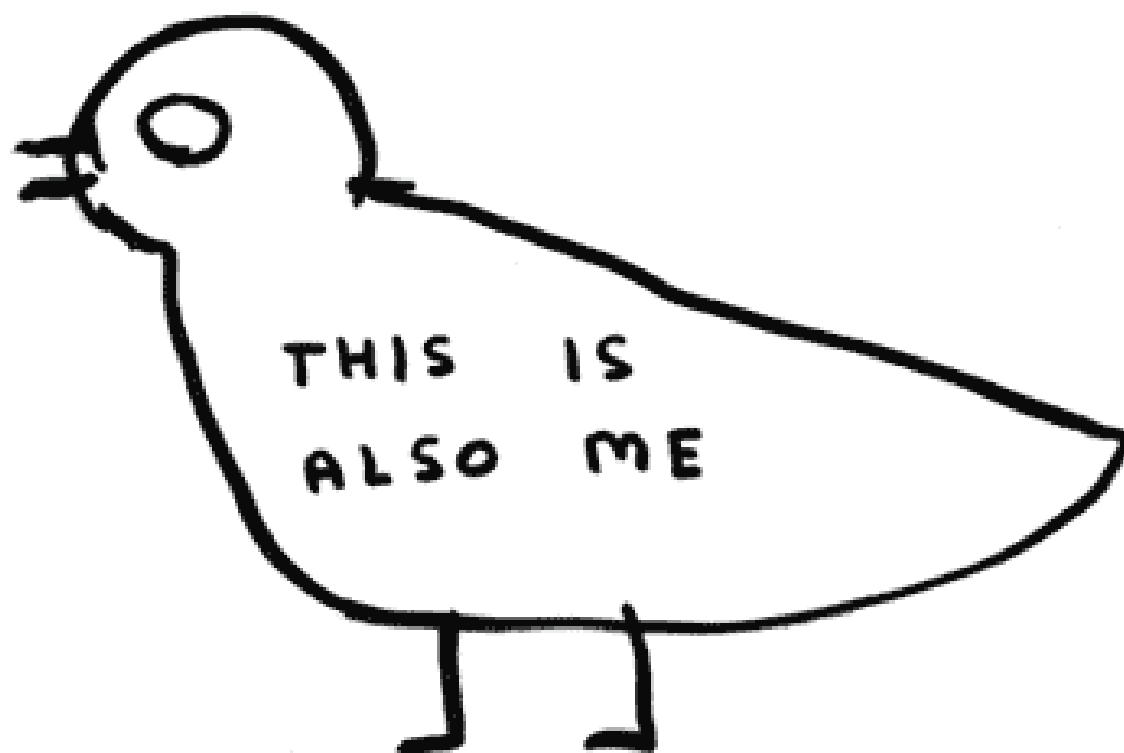
Well, OK. But what if there is neither a fixed me nor a shattered me? What if there is no I but there is still a this? What if we deploy a different logic, one that is not premised on the existence, or lack of existence, of a fixed identity? That logic is repetition.

Repetition allows us to think limits, forms, and continuity without identity. That is, repetition allows us to think a certain kind of sameness that is not opposed to difference. So rather than being stuck in an *either/or*—either I am a fixed self or I’m a series of disconnected moments—I am one who repeats. I am the act of repeating this, then this again and anew, then again and anew.

Each moment of me is me; each moment of this is this. None is privileged. But nor are they isolated: they are repetitions of each other, a taking up and reconfiguring of elements to make something new. I am this network of moments, this limit that is always becoming. When there’s another me that doesn’t seem to fit—well, it does fit: it recasts the network, redraws the limit (a limit that is a process, anyway, not a stable line).

Repetition displaces any call to an original me. It’s not that it undoes the original (as Derrida’s iteration does); it’s that there never was an original: we are always already a repetition.

(Daniel Coffeen, <http://hilariousbookbinder.blogspot.sg/2011/02/some-of-my-favorite-concepts-repetition.html>)



Let's return again to instructions and interactions but this time embodied and on the go.

Here is a picture of Ed Ruscha's *Every Building on Sunset Strip*. Ruscha set up a limit and therein and in what it produced is the pleasure. Not this building or that mundane building, but the entire series, printed in a book that is itself an unfolding strip.

His authorship is in the idea, in a mode of going, in collection, selection, formatting, repeating, block by block the same action, photographing every building and putting it together in one continuous book, like the Sunset Strip, with both sides of the block facing each other.



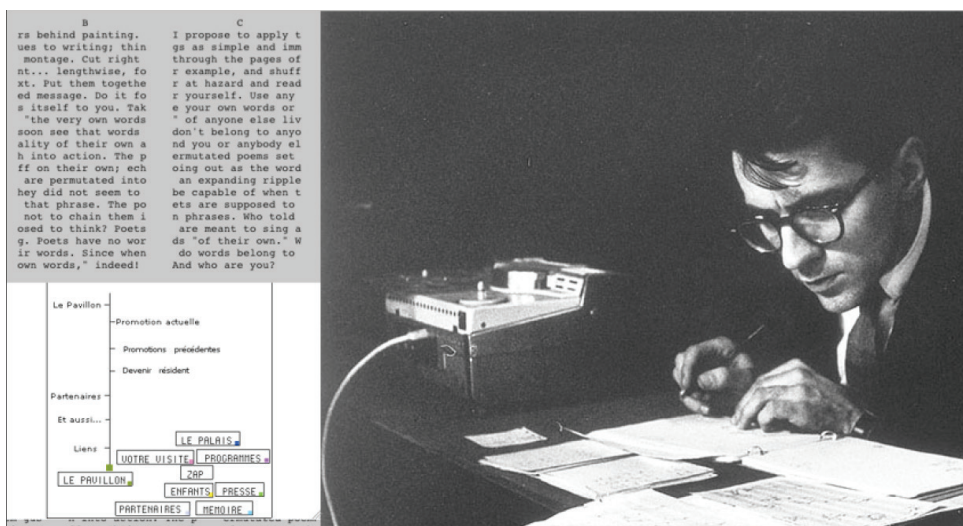
Now, think of Google Street View. Google has photographed almost every building on every street on every continent on this planet. Perhaps we could make a project entitled *Every Building on Every Street on Every Continent on This Planet*.



ON VARIABILITY

the envelope of the possible, the variable, erasing oneself for instructions or one's instructions are oneself, all ones predilections permuted, conjured in any possible way, the computational stage is the amplification of all possible me's. its all meta, and yet so visceral and physical. there is nothing abstract about data, in and of itself, it's a material sign, and relationally computationally, the become effervescent.

to bring forward codes and rules that produce events.



13

Self
Becoming
/ Becoming
Recordings

A Project of Social Bodies

69 Love Stories, Everyone is Here, Remake Unmake, Art as Instructions: from individual actions, to the world of actions, and human relations, the work of art as the work of living, living well, and becoming closer to living itself, that as Virginia Woolf says:

the whole world is a work of art; that we are parts of the work of art. Hamlet or a Beethoven quartet is the truth about this vast mass that we call the world. But there is no Shakespeare, there is no Beethoven; certainly and emphatically there is no God; we are the words; we are the music; we are the thing itself.

(Virginia Woolf, "A Sketch of the Past," in *Moments of Being*)

Relational art or relational aesthetics is a mode or tendency in fine art practice originally observed and highlighted by French art critic Nicolas Bourriaud. Bourriaud defined the approach as "a set of artistic practices which take as their theoretical and practical point of departure the whole of human relations and their social context, rather than an independent and private space." [1] The artist can be more accurately viewed as the "catalyst" in relational art, rather than being at the centre. [2]

Bourriaud explores this notion of relational aesthetics through examples of what he calls relational art. According to Bourriaud, relational art encompasses "a set of artistic practices which take as their theoretical and practical point of departure the whole of human relations and their social context, rather than an independent and private space." [13]

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Relational_art)

69 Love Stories

I've always wanted to form on-the-go international collectives, being varied people together collectively, like a theatre or study group, like I had done with *Art as Invention*, or *Art and Culture*, or my films.

The films I made always had a nucleus of an artistic group, a sort of collective, and the software projects a distributed authoring environment. With *69 Love Stories* I wanted to bring together both computational and cultural ideas of repetition and difference, instructions and inscriptions and ideas for distributed and collective authoring. I wanted to find ways to be others and get to know them through collaborative works.

Revolution of Everyday Life flowered from a desire to make a film called “69 Love Stories.” The title was inspired by the 3-disc album *69 Love Songs* by The Magnetic Fields, an extraordinarily beautiful group of recordings. You might say we made one love song, “Revolution,” and so the idea was to create a platform to carry on with the ideas of repetition and difference that informed Raymond Queneau’s *Exercises in Style*, by making 69 love stories that were the same but different. This would create a conversation about instructions, cultural programming, ideas of revolution, a new way to think about recording and film as something global and conversation, as a dialogue.

I thought of two actions to film, two instructions. I was looking at Google Street View images, and there were, in some of them, this feeling of coming upon something, a scene, a space, just after the fact, where you were not quite sure what happened.

It is as if we’ve come upon the site, the atmosphere, of an accident or better said, agitation, some confluence of weather, the landscape, a building, some human figures, hands in their head, or sitting on the side of the road, this very casual wreckage of something terribly banal, something spilled over emotionally and otherwise, a dispersed event, the human presence, strange and alien, yet all too ordinary and everyday, an agglomeration of things, not seen, not framed precisely, not even staged, but for a brief moment performed for the frame of an indifferent mechanical recording.

The other would be to upload the supermarket scene from “Revolution” where the two girls place a trail of Campbell soup cans in the middle of a shopping aisle and ask people to walk on them. We would ask people to remake it all over the globe and then go make love and film themselves.

This action would be the first of 69 that we hoped to do over the next year and grow this site and involve you .

So not only are we launching a film—we are making a call to action.

We had statements familiar in many manifestos:

The 69lovestories group, is dedicated to the preservation of the legacy of love and freedom movements throughout history. We aspire to invest the experience of public space with wonder, to resurrect art history from the bowels of despair, and to impregnate the institutions of commercial supermarkets with the joy of man’s desiring.

Taking its cue from Raymond Queneau’s book *Exercises in Style*, a collection of 99 retellings of the the same story, The Magnetic Fields’ three-disc set *69 Love Songs*, and Marc Lafia’s *Permutations*, *69 Love Stories* is the retelling of the same 3 minute (or less) story in 69 locations in countries all over the world with 69 different sets of international actors and non actors made by 69 international artists as designed by instructions and variations on one simple story.

In the end this proved very difficult to do financially and logistically without institutional support. In fact, the scale of an artist's work is so much about financial backing, either by collectors or institutions. Often times they are one and the same. At a certain point, you must decide to work for that support or get on working the best you can with what you have.

69lovestories an instruction set

Everyone is Here

Perhaps my greatest gift is just imagining, the very delusion of imaging, the very pleasure of it, itself an event of art, that while writing and thinking of projects like this one, that they are and will become real.

Everyone is Here will be a series of global gatherings to introduce and connect people through sociability, philosophic revelry, enjoyment, reflection and action. It involves both private and public actions, projects of collaborations and solitude, including on-the-go projects, critical and cross-media research and investigations that are site specific to places, groups, and individuals.

Everyone is Here

A Project
of Collective
Becoming

Philosophy
Platform

Marc Lafia

Instructions for
a new kind of being
space

selfbecoming

YouTube f SUBSCRIBE

Blog

Art as Invention

Participation

Place

Social Media Public Space

Well Done Kids, Now What?

Films

Confessions of an Image

Exploding Oedipus

Love and Art

Paradise

Revolution of Everyday Life

Marc Lafia

Biography

Contact

Editions

Grants and Exhibitions

Project Proposals

The Infinite Universes of Giordano Bruno: A Computational Libretto

69 Global

La Chinoise 2011

-- ..

Welcome to the Project for Self Becoming a series of global gatherings to introduce and connect people through sociability, philosophic revelry, enjoyment, reflection and action. This site is our ongoing archive, list of proposals and communications point for our projects.

The works coming from the group are a social experience happening both on a person-to-person level and in and through the communities and their specific cultures in which they are made, performed and recorded.



69lovestories Invitation

Action 1 Instructions (Private Space)

Action 2 Instructions (Public Space)

Helpful Links

Blog

Blog Roll

Contact

Links

Method

Quotes and References

Suggested Reading

Suggested Viewing

Vision

'We having nothing in common but the illusion of being together.'

-Raoul Vaneigem, *The Revolution of Everyday Life*



Welcome to 69lovestories.com. Here at this site we hope to create a platform for conversation around ideas of everyday revolution – a new way to think about recording and film as a global conversation, or dialogue. 69lovestories is the next project in a series of recordings/films by Marc Lafia the latest being Lafia's film, *Revolution of Everyday Life*. Over the next year we hope to initiate a series of actions: sometimes they will involve recordings, getting together in different parts of the world, doing workshops, etc...

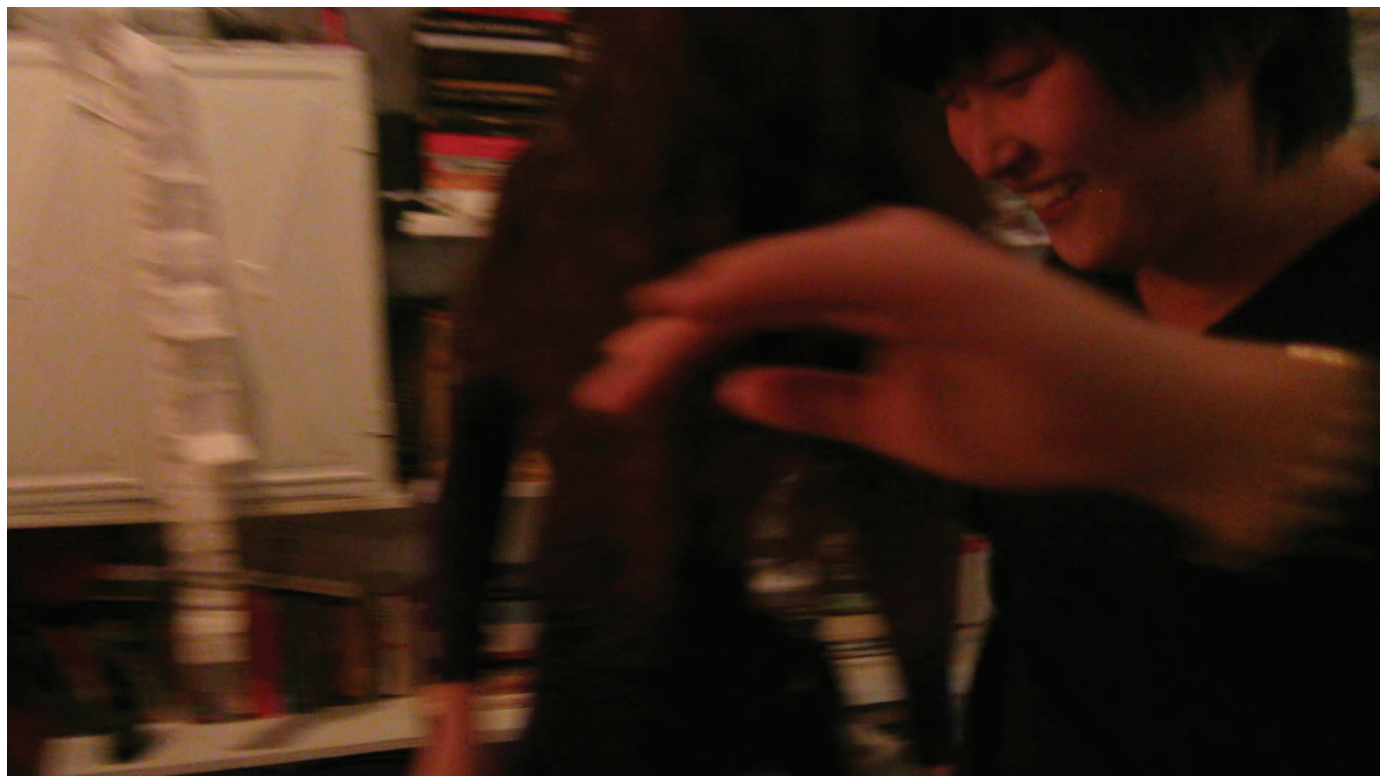
We begin the 69lovestories project with two invitations – record the private or the public, as we explore the notion of being together as a social body vs. being alone. These two recordings, are the first of 69 that we hope to do over the next year as we grow this site and involve you...

We've also included a reference section in this site for you to check out more actions and ideas around everyday revolution, as well as the artists that inform 69lovestories. But we also welcome your suggestions and ideas. Please feel free to contribute your own recommendations by linking a book, interview, essay or artist bio to Suggested Reading. You can also make film recommendations or upload a video clip to Suggested Viewing. Please include a brief review/explanation of the content you post.



Check us out on Facebook and Twitter!

27, Film Still



27, Film Still





Our project's aim to re-evaluate the mental conditioning imposed on us by our technology and media. We want to produce new architectures of the social encounter, encounters no longer tethered by the familiar anchors of place: class, clique, place in the sexual hierarchy, or financial transaction.

How we look at our world and ourselves is shaped not just by ideas, but by the way we are habituated to perceive. Our projects call on you to imagine the future in terms of the repeated deconstruction and reconstruction of the "local" and the "subject," and to actively discover the things that are "coming" and "forthcoming."

Seeing the seeing in and of ourselves, our culture, our technologies, our sciences, our very status of being and becoming catalyzes the project

What it is?

To do this we are creating a series of global gatherings to introduce and connect people through sociability, philosophic revelry, enjoyment, reflection and action. It involves both private and public actions, projects of collaborations and solitude, including happenings, dinners, parties, on-the-go projects, critical and cross media research and investigations that are site specific to places, groups and individuals.

Taking the experience of making films, online publishing, artist residencies, social media projects, emergent knowledge archives and teaching, and further them to create a platform to produce a new medium of encounter at the juncture of research and recordings.

The aim is to produce projects that bring its participants into a larger participation and awareness of context of the world. To create projects realized individually and collaboratively that give a relational sense of the all-at-once-ness of things.

The platform is a program to create and observe an emergent narrative in the distributed space of the personal and collective. To work at Self-transformation which involves self-destruction. Coming-to-be – passing-away. To be attuned to a beauty and value that lies precisely in its potential for unexpected flights, moments of self-reflection, and whimsy.

It is not about product not productivity. It is about being present to the particular and creating with the lightest touch a new kind of being space, a new kind of archive, a series of performative exercises to find the shape of ourselves in contact with varied realities.

The two (three) year project involves traveling to 15 countries, where a gatherings of 15 to 35 people get together for 3 days and through a series of exercises create a variety of mixed media works that in their aggregate create an index or portrait of a simultaneity of being in the world.

Part anthropology, performance art, documentary, happening, systems analysis, self-critique the idea is to heighten the sense of being public and private, individual and collective.

- ¶ it is a desire is to create a series of maps, equations
- ¶ to visualize the mesh within our selves of overlapping systems,
- ¶ for the project to map these on the go collectives as nodes in a global system
- ¶ to take an index of our contemporary environment.

The project is a mapping of the outer edges of the ourselves, psychically, emotionally, and geographically.

Why a collective?

The collective puts into practice the social, conversational and distributed aspect of the network.

Only by gathering together to know ourselves in each other, to be part of a larger inquiry which is to live concurrent to others, to be in a larger embrace of time, a politic of being, an island in the net can we see ourselves.

As much as we insist on our individualism we are a social body, networks of social bodies and systems. – As such ...

How does it work?

The process sets out a way to inhabiting and producing time, new ways to record observe and invent.

Drawing on exercises, instructions, scripts, images, readings, an ongoing group investigate their "private lives," "private moments," "friends," "families," and others

It is a being that reflects the new modes of personal recording, personal revelation.

Let's say we know Federico in Rome, we meet in Rome with his creative friends and others. We set about to do three creative projects in the course of four days. It is an event open to everyone, anyone that shows up. No applications, no reviews, no program, no show times.

Part workshop, part party, it is an accounting of things. We make a film, have a happening, a party and meet friends to discover each other's agendas.

Over the course of traveling the world, the collective works of the events are put together in a film, online, in an exhibition.

What it is not.

It's not an art biennial, an academic conference, a spiritual retreat, a WTO protest, the tour-de-France

Why we are doing it?

We want with each other to see our perception, to see the frameworks in which we see and apprehend the world.

We want to discover a new kind of being space, a new kind of archive, and shapes of ourselves in contact with varied realities.

We want to unfold our fictions and fact, our everyday with the invented, imagination and reality, our inner and outer selves, the stories that haunt us, the narratives in front of us.

Why we are doing it?

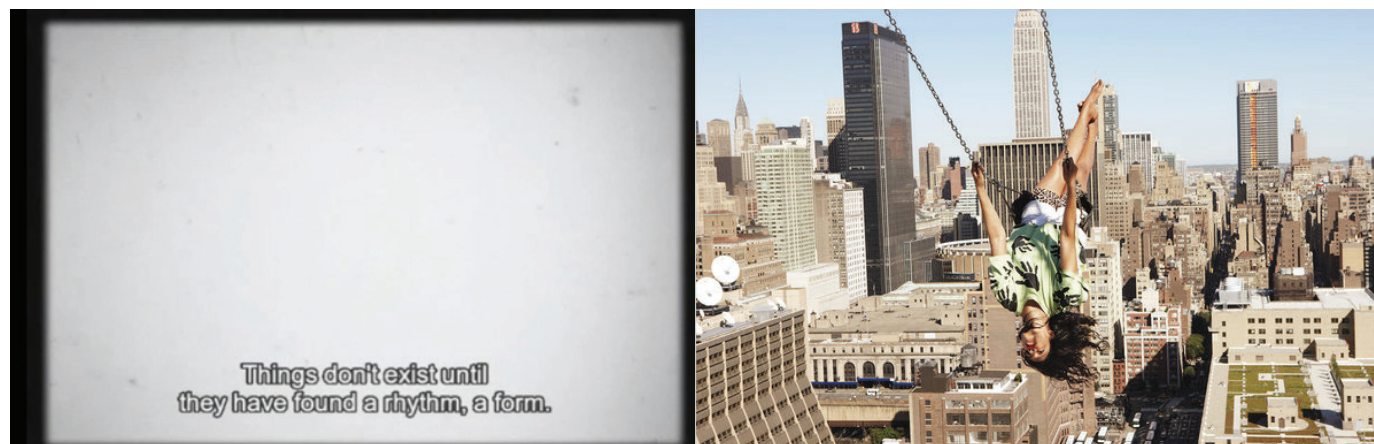
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Participation

(select excerpts from research for the above projects reading participation through Lygia Clarke, Claire Bishop, Relational Aesthetics, Precariousness, Hal Foster, Giorgio Agamben, and Brian Holmes)



1

If we look at the proliferation of collaborative art practices today, it seems that many no longer have the oppositional and anti-authoritarian punch they had in the late 1960s and 1970s—when radical theatre, community arts and critical pedagogy emerged in opposition to dominant modes of social control. Today participation is used by business as a tool for improving efficiency and workforce morale; it is all pervasive in the mass-media in the form of reality television; and it is a privileged medium for government funding agencies seeking to create the impression of social inclusion. Collaborative practices need to take this knot of conventions on board if they are to have critical bite.

It would argue that the best socially collaborative art does not derive from a superegoic injunction to “love thy neighbor,” but from the position of “do not give up on your desire.” In other words, pursue your unconscious desire, as far as you can.

(http://www.communityarts.net/readingroom/archivefiles/2006/07/socially_engage.php)

2

So what are we looking for?

“Rethinking the conventions of participation, which are today somewhat orthodox.”

3

*Looking for what's rotting:
The inner disgust, appetite
We have only to look at the new French extremity in cinema,
the new brutalism (Breillat, Noe, etc...)
Excess (Artaud, Grotowski, Beck, Bataille...)*

7

It seems more pressing to invent possible relations with our neighbors in the present than to bet on happier tomorrows.

(Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, p. 45.)

This DIY, microtopian ethos is what Bourriaud perceives to be the core political significance of relational aesthetics.

7a

But moving beyond the 'scenarios' of relational aesthetics we call for a participation that is performed for its rewards and perhaps even more so its deceptions and delusions its hidden agendas, its covert political subtexts.

8

*Some argue this is not enough
As art
As critique
As being
As being engaged
As becoming*

To really look and be with others

"In some way we come to exist in the moment of being addressed," Judith Butler writes, "and something about our existence proves precarious when that address fails." In "Precarious Life" (2004), her brief essay on Emmanuel Levinas, Butler explores the notion of "the face," which the French philosopher poses as the very image of "the extreme precariousness of the other." "To respond to the face, to understand its meaning," Butler argues, "means to be awake to what is precarious in another life or, rather, the precariousness of life itself."

(Hal Foster, "Towards a Grammar of Emergency," <http://arcade.stanford.edu/content/towards-grammar-emergency>)

*To do so, to gather reflect, commune, take action, invent being
is to resist, and interrogate, the demands of digital culture.*

This interest in the contingencies of a "relationship between"—rather than the object itself—is a hallmark of Gillick's work and of his interest in collaborative practice as a whole. This idea of considering the work of art as a potential trigger for participation is hardly new—think of Happenings, Fluxus instructions, 1970s performance art, and Joseph Beuys's declaration that "everyone is an artist."

(Claire Bishop, "Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics")



"Working online I oftentimes feel disconnected from my body, Half-engaged in a stream of weightless graphics and information, it's easy to lose track of the screen's physical parameters—and your own," says Erin Shirreff, recounting the familiar experience of restlessly navigating virtual space.

Not participation but embodiment, being bodies, knowing being as such.

This entire experience into which art flows, the issue of liberty itself, of the expansion of the individual's consciousness, of the return to myth, the rediscovery of rhythm, dance, the body, the senses, which finally are what we have as weapons of direct, perceptual, participatory knowledge... is revolutionary in the total sense of behavior... Helio Oiticica

(Simone Osthoff, "Lygia Clark and Hélio Oiticica: A Legacy of Interactivity and Participation for a Telematic Future" <http://www.leonardo.info/isast/spec.projects/osthoff/osthoff.html>)



Umberto Eco, The Open Work – The Open Body

In short, it installs a new relationship between the contemplation and the utilization of a work of art.

Eco regarded the work of art as a reflection of the conditions of our existence in a fragmented modern culture, while Bourriaud sees the work of art producing these conditions. The interactivity of relational art is therefore superior to optical contemplation of an object, which is assumed to be passive and disengaged, because the work of art is a “social form” capable of producing positive human relationships. As a consequence, the work is automatically political in implication and emancipatory in effect.

(Claire Bishop, “Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics”)

The principal virtue of this show lies in its understanding of the participatory dimension of Clark’s work. With this in mind, the curators (Manuel Borja-Villel, Nuria Enguita and Luciano Figueiredo) have made replicas of the jumpsuits, dust guards, masks, gloves and other utensils that Clark employed in order to combine sensorial exploration and therapy. The first floor of the Fundació Tàpies was thus transformed into a laboratory of tactile, sensual experiments in which viewers could don masks and jumpsuits. Finally, it seems, Clark’s notion has been realised: that the festive, healing qualities of art overcome the importance of the artistic object, and that art serve the people.

(Juan Vicente Aliaga, “Lygia Clark: Fundació Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona, Spain,” translated by Vincent Martin http://www.frieze.com/issue/review/lygia_clark/)

Perhaps the work here is contemplation and being. And so to recover discover the body in us in others in bodies in space in the network. To rename agency to become agency.

Exploitation, exclusion, cynicism, ruthless pleasure, co-optations, social transformations, subjectivizing forces, the art object, material precariousness, precarity, unfold a complex knot, excess, self becoming, to awake to the other, the other in me, ones own warm breadth – how do these come to meaning how do we come to be being?

The most striking projects that constitute the history of participatory art unseat all of the polarities on which this discourse is founded (individual/collective, author/spectator, active/passive, real life/art) but not with the goal of collapsing them. In so doing, they hold the artistic and social critiques in tension. Felix Guattari's paradigm of transversality offers one such way of thinking through these artistic operations: he leaves art as a category in its place, but insists upon its constant flight into and across other disciplines, putting both art and the social into question, even while simultaneously reaffirming art as a universe of value. Jacques Rancière offers another: the aesthetic regime is constitutively contradictory, shuttling between autonomy and heteronomy ("the aesthetic experience is effective in as much as it is the experience of that and"12).

He argues that in art and education alike, there needs to be a mediating object—a spectacle that stands between the idea of the artist and the feeling and interpretation of the spectator: "This spectacle is a third thing, to which both parts can refer but which prevents any kind of 'equal' or 'undistorted' transmission. It is a mediation between them. [...] The same thing which links them must separate them."13 In different ways, Rancière and Guattari offer alternative frameworks for thinking the artistic and the social simultaneously; for both, art and the social are not to be reconciled or collapsed, but sustained in continual tension.

(Claire Bishop, Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship)

5.
Offer people a chance to throw eggs at you.



6.
Rearrange the ordinary or everyday, dress up statues, go into a supermarket and arrange 100 cans or packages into an a minimalist serial floor piece.



Remake/Unmake

I have always been fascinated by the idea of remaking, unmaking.

Remake/Unmake brings together two generations of families across Shanghai, Paris, Istanbul, and New York City in conversation and performance around film to examine history, memory, art, revolution, and society. Scenes from a uniquely identified film made in the host country are shared as a starting point for dialogue and re-enactment to create a multi-screen video installation that crosses cultures and generations.

Permutations of a Thousand and One Nights: A Computational Video, Surround Sound Installation

I became fascinated with the idea of narration, where it happens and how. I had for some time been thinking about rules-based art, algorithms; a database of cinema which I had been using in varied projects. But I wanted to proceed with these ideas in an internalized way, procedurally, not literally. I wanted to engage these strategies as approaches to shape and perform narrative.

The work is an investigation of the possibilities of computational *mise-en-scène*.

The realized piece will be a three-screen video installation varying in different releases with lengths from 12 to 17 minutes long. The piece concerns computation and storytelling. Computation is used to create iterative scenarios, excavating the interior of storytelling, presenting narrative as an iterative form itself, forever turning on authorial position, structure, context, memory and representation.

The content proper concerns a contemporary story, told from multiple perspectives, about the translation of *The Book of the Thousand and One Nights*. These include stories of Sir Richard Burton's translation of the original story, a contemporary graduate student's investigation of those tales through film and readings, and enactments and real life stories and anecdotes by varied peoples of Bedford Stuyvesant (Bed-Stuy), Brooklyn. The work concerns fabulation, accretion, memory, translation, translocation; and it is used to explore computation both as a metaphor and as an engine that produces change, differentiation, autopoiesis.

Through the story materials and computational rules, sequences and chapters will be constituted this way, configured that way ushering forth a meta-discourse on story, on fabulation. Just as the original stories were kept alive in the Middle East by professional storytellers who would inflect them anew each time, performing them in coffee houses in Persia, Arabia and Egypt, perhaps computation will reveal new relations at odd angles, folding whose story it is here, and then there, forging new links and associations.

14

Delirium

Over time, I made various short films along with the long form narratives, computations, permutations and installations.



A woman doctor in distress, having had to tell a cellist he is losing his vision, attends to a man suffering from delirium who cuts himself on a boat. The man was listening to a woman sing a song about illusion, love, and life and cuts himself on a railing while looking at the sea, rallying himself to jump overboard to join the clouds. The soundtrack goes on with ramblings of him being Columbus and his impressions of the New World. The blood of the man spills onto the woman, her breast, her lips. Camera blurs sky and blood and lips and breast hands and whispers. She bandages him as they take each other into each other under her Italian suppositions.

15

The
Unbounded
Word

Long before the Internet, books were the miracle that carried information far and wide. Some scribbles printed on a page conveyed worlds. But as Marshall McLuhan and Quentin Fiore so deftly showed in *The Medium is the Massage*, a book is a material technology. It is a thing with limits that inflects information to fit its needs and desires (most notably, perhaps, books tend to be linear).

Books—from codex to clay table, from papyrus to scroll, from hardback to paperback to e-book—are bound by their material form. Bookbinding is the process of physically assembling a book from a number of folded or unfolded sheets of paper or other material. In *The Unbounded Wor(l)d*, Marc Lafia reconsiders the book and re-figures it as a new site of possibility, as a geography, as a territory with new ways of knowing, seeing, and enjoying.

Lafia writes with books. He doesn't write books; he doesn't write about books. He uses the books themselves as his material to write new books. The focus of the content has shifted from what's in the book—the words and information—to the form itself. The material here is not words or facts or fictions but bindings, spines, pages, and the vast cultural discourse of books.

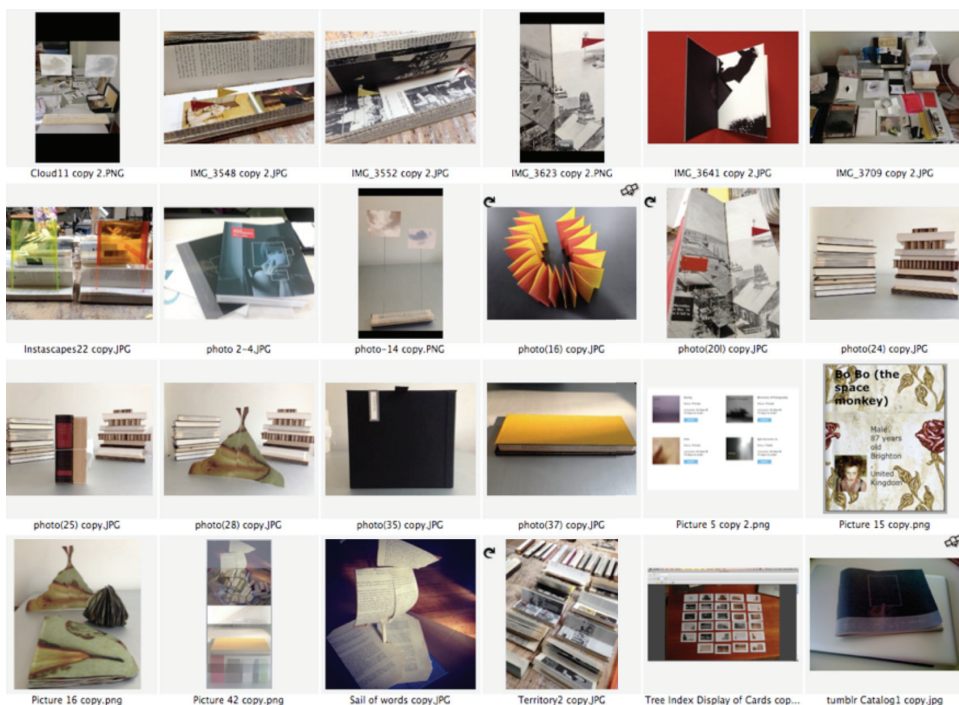
Lafia comes at the book from different angles. He takes up found books and uses their pages, bindings, spine, words, covers, contexts, and layouts to re-situate, re-purpose, and re-imagine the book as a new site, re-embodied and spatially situated. Other times, he builds the book from scratch, usually using complex folding techniques that allow the pages to be juxtaposed or splayed.

These books become sites, environments, creating new situations from the spatial, unwinding, re-territorialization and dispersal of the once bound. Here, the book is unbound, unleashing new modes of reckoning—of knowing, seeing, organizing, enjoying.

The results are as varied and complex as the creation themselves. We find Somerset Maugham turned inside out; we find the live tweets of a London university riot enduring long past their digital lifespan, the words echoing to eternity; we find trees splayed and literally indexed; we find sawed spines supporting clouds. What was once bound and organized has been reorganized—folded, pleated, and redistributed. Suddenly, the cultural, political, and personal meet at new and surprising angles, an origami of knowing at once whimsical and poignant.

The book as we know it is dying. But this is not an elegy for the book. This is not nostalgia. Lafia takes up the exquisite detritus—books today are sold by the pound—and finds new beauty, new lives, new possibilities. Much as the land artists shaped and re-purposed the desolate and abandoned, Lafia shapes and re-purposes the book, forging new territories out of the pages we are abandoning.

(Marc Lafia & Daniel Coffeen, <http://cargocollective.com/marclafia/filter/marclafia/Artist-Books>)



EXHIBITION



马克·拉菲亚——五金书店重点推荐艺术家

展期：2013年7月15日至9月15日

地址：北京市东城区箭厂胡同38号（国子监街内）

邮编：100007

MABSOCIETY与北京五金书店合作推出纽约艺术家马克·拉菲亚的个人画册展示活动。这些在这些作品中，马克使用现成的材料从雕塑和概念两个方面着手，生动再现了他对电影，摄影图像及主观性一直以来的探索。他特有的主观视觉陈述在这些手工制作，限量发行的图书中活灵活现。在未来的数月中，五金书店将存有少量拉菲亚的画册以供大众阅读与购买。

五金书店由艺术家策划和运营，为来自中国及其它区域的艺术家的提供一个展示与销售其个人出版物的平台，并将定期推出专题性的书架陈列。
(www.wujinbeijing.com)

Marc Lafia - Featured artist at Wu Jin bookstore
Time: July 15th - September 15th 2013
Address: 38 Jianchang Hutong (off Guozijian Jie),
Dongcheng District, Beijing 100007

MABSOCIETY in collaboration with Wu Jin Bookshop (Beijing) is pleased to feature a special presentation of publications by New York-based artist Marc Lafia. Using ready-made materials in both sculptural and conceptual ways, Lafia's works are an exploration of cinema, the photographic image and personal history. His subjective visual narratives come to life in this series of handcrafted, limited edition books. For the next few months Wu Jin Bookshop will stock a small number of Lafia's publications for viewing and sales.

Curated and run by artists, Wu Jin Bookshop provides a platform for display and sales of independent publications from China and beyond, and will periodically feature thematic groupings on our bookshelves. (www.wujinbeijing.com)

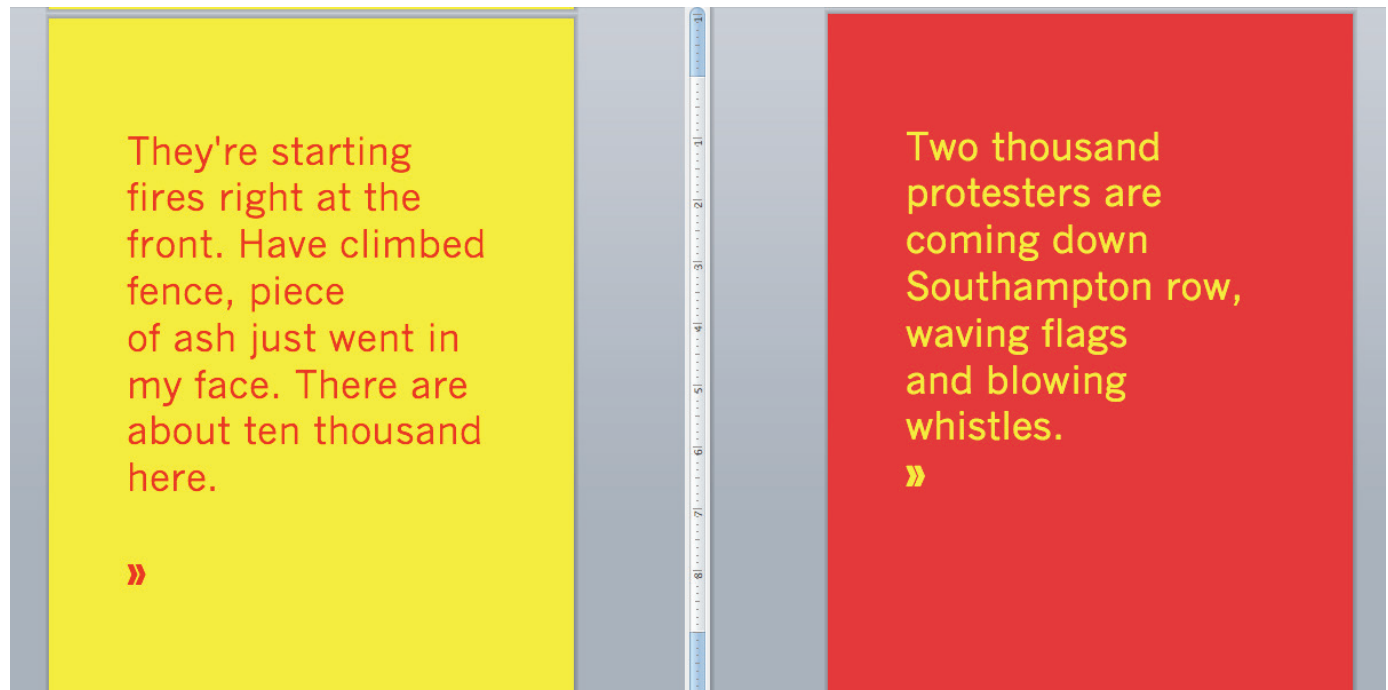
Book of Territories

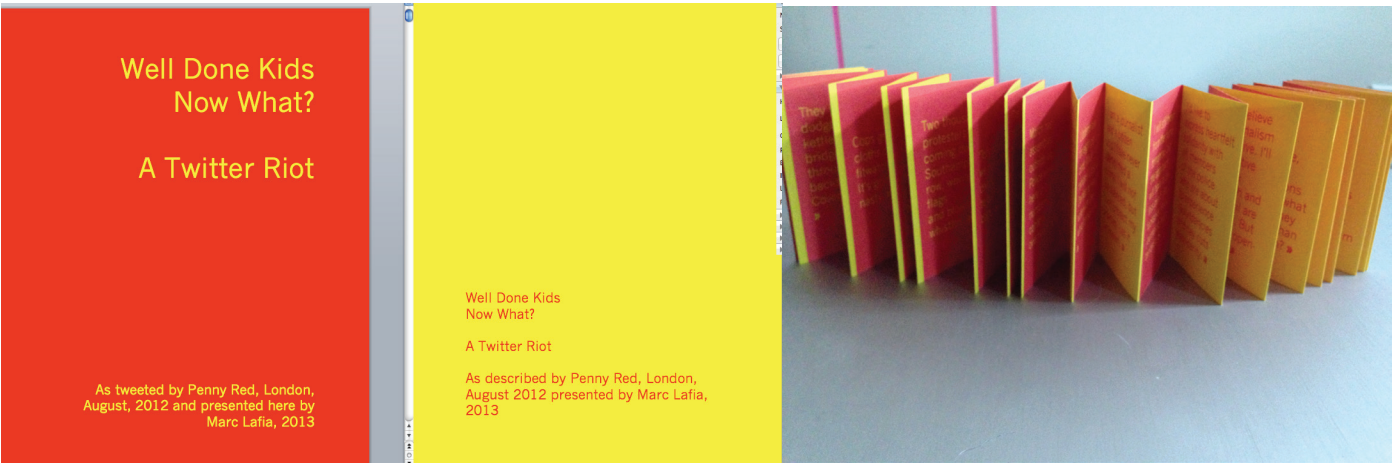


Using select found books and cutting them $1\frac{5}{8}$ inches from their spine, a new book is created, becoming an object, a space, a territory. The flags placed on the surface of ridged pages, on and around words, denote it as a new space, a space of conquest, and a space of signs naming, overtaking other signs. Somewhere between Mallarmé and Broodthaers, the space of words and their figures become sites in geometry of space.



In *Well Done Kids, What Now?*, a Twitter narrative, the posts of Penny Red are used to put forward and highlight a new kind of reportage, a new narrative discourse.





Say Farewell to the Revolution; or, Post Cards from the Fronts of Perception Management

From: public relations hugs and kisses

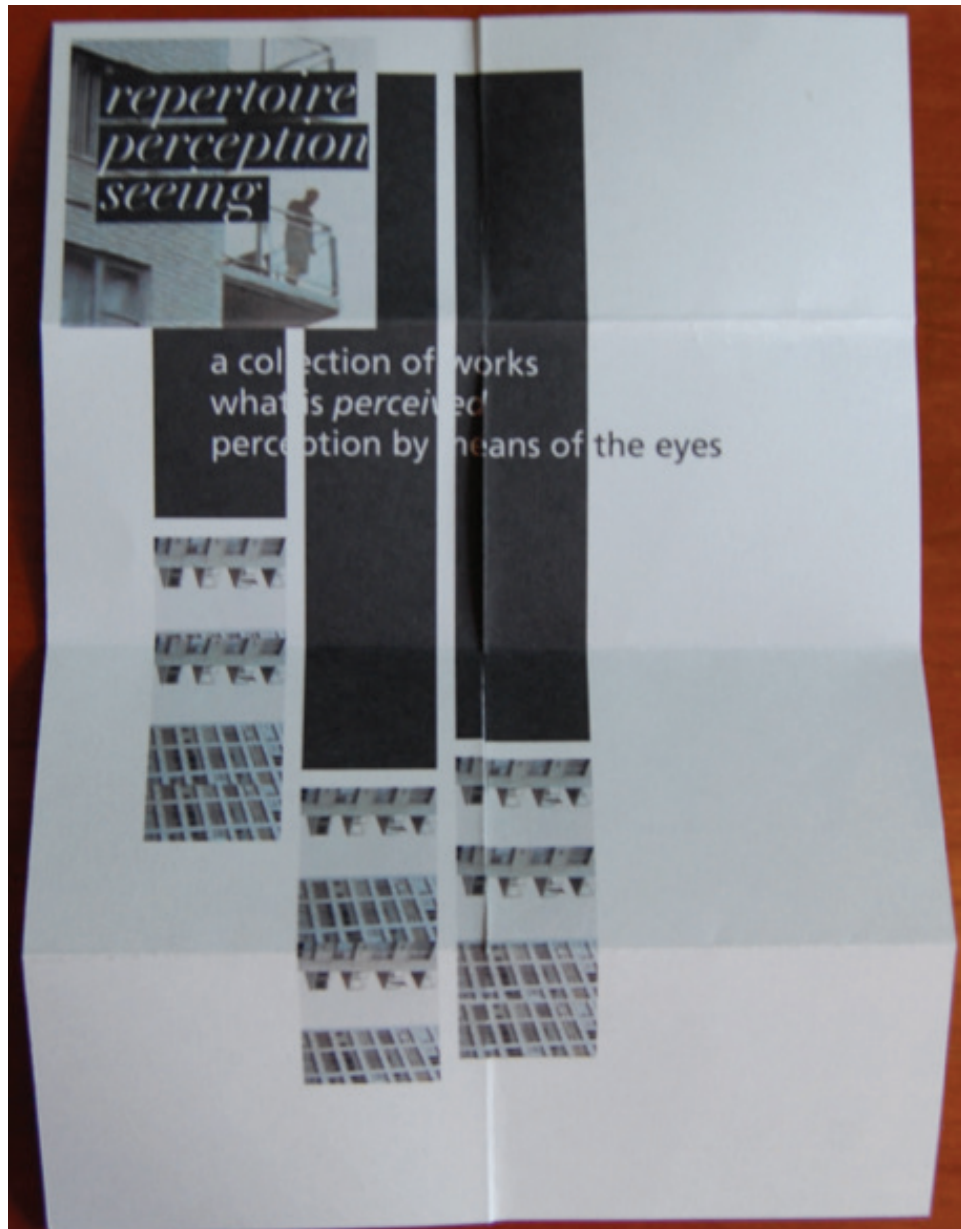


Both a book and object of one statement wrapped in plastic, *hugs and kisses* presents 70 color field prints with statements about the engineering, management and shaping of individual and social desire. The fear of the irrational mind and the mass propelled corporate interests with the propaganda tools (euphemistically known as “public relations”) to appeal to and assuage people’s selfish desires. The commodifying of the self would prepare the soil for the politics of the triumph of the self as the ultimate expression of democracy. The seductive print works of color fields and elegant text give consistency of form and rhetorical argument to the idea that people can be made better, they can be engineered.

Here the topology of the book is pleated with neither beginning nor end, putting forward the complexity of the multiple trajectories of the social



Repertoire



The book, not quite a book, but something that folds into a book, is a kind of puzzle of space and action, suggesting that seeing is a repertoire, as is space, action and perception. To repeat is never quite to repeat. To intervene is both to repeat and to try to break repetition. In the digital and in nature, buildings, assassins, viruses continually replicate and disperse, well outside our perceptual field.

REPERTOIRE

a collection of works

SEEING

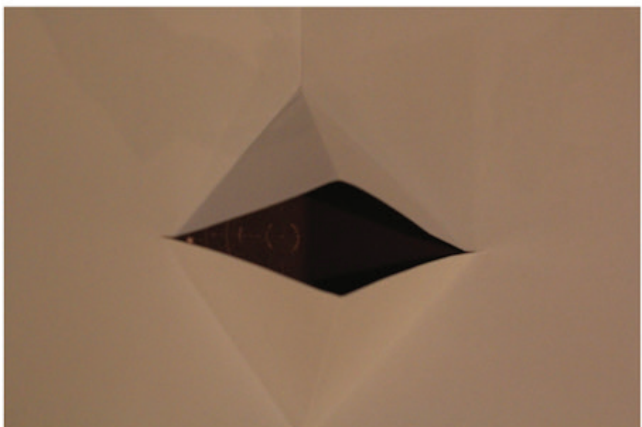
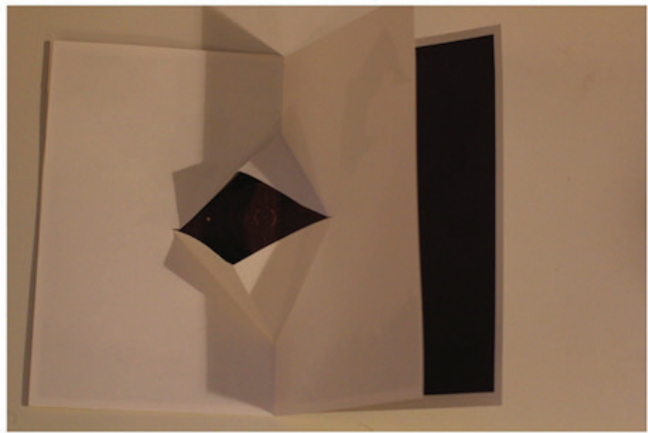
preception by mean of the eyes

PRECEPTION

what is perceivied



Void



In 1960, French avant-garde artist Yves Klein created a photo montage of himself leaping from a wall over a quiet Paris street. The black and white photograph, called *The Leap Into the Void*, was Klein's way of embracing the irrational and

celebrating groundlessness. The book creates a spatial zone that brings together Yves Klein's notion of the zone of immaterial pictorial sensibility with Bas Jan Ader's work *All is Falling*.

These are passed through a reading of Tacita Dean's work *Disappearance at Sea*, which brings together *In Search of the Miraculous*, Ader's fatal attempt to sail across the Atlantic, in a 13-foot pocket cruiser called *Ocean Wave*; and Donald Crowhurst, an inexperienced sailor entering the Golden Globe Single-Handed Round-the-World Yacht Race and who, like Ader, never returned home. All three are leaps into the depths of the unconscious, the great *terra incognita*—the unknown land.

Antoinette



The work combines two books, *Youth and Sex with Marie Antoinette* and places them inside a folio case with arched windows setting off a narrative within an architectural space to amplify both the confines of the body and the binding of narrative inside books.

Pear



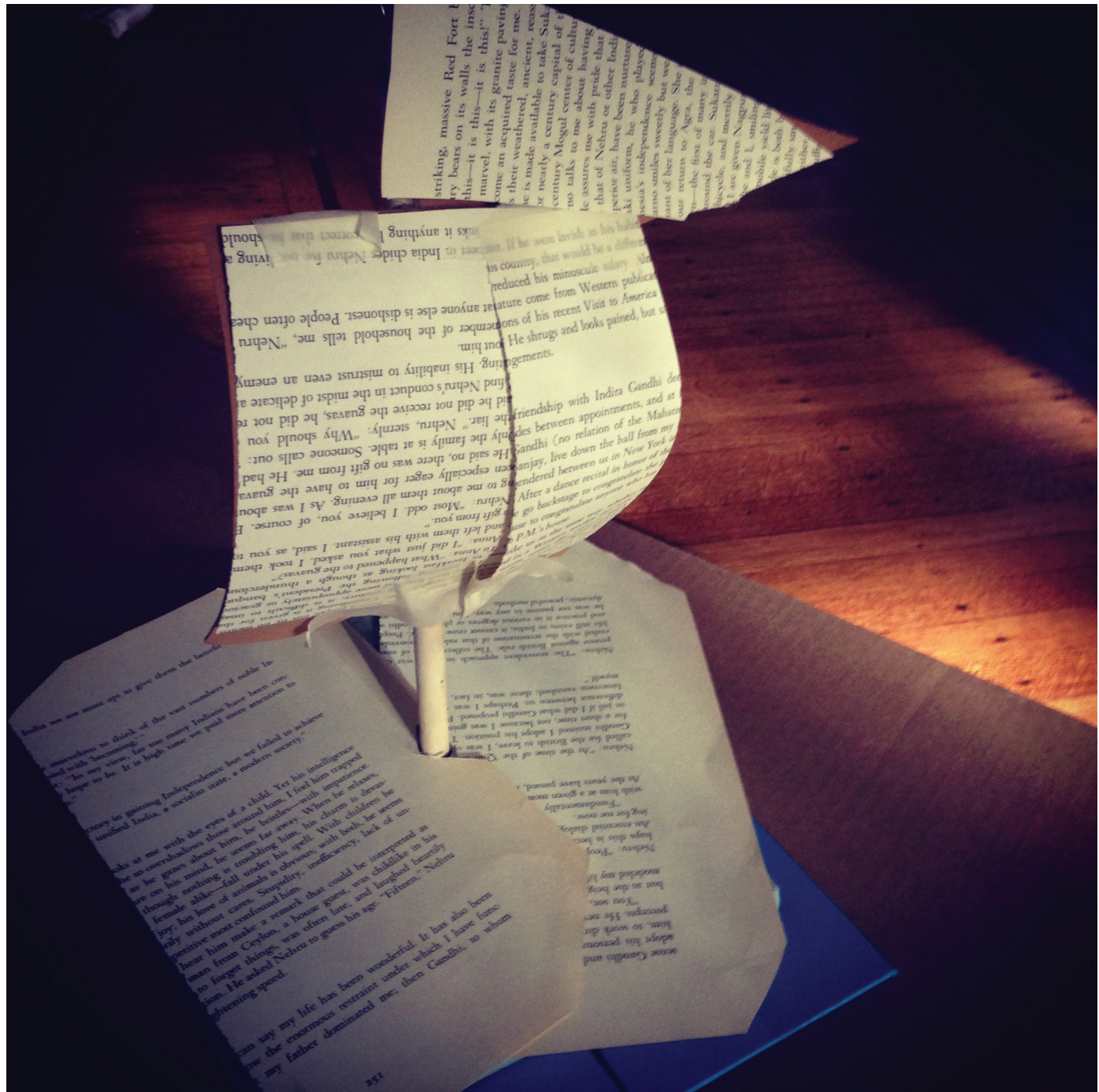
What is the pearness of the pear, its familiar shape, its taste, its color, its same but unique dimensions . . . here the book binding is used like the core of pear—and each page unique. Tapering towards the top (botanically this is the bottom, the stem end) and rounded at the bottom (botanically this is the apex).

Book Bag

A book bag is a durable bag, satchel or backpack that is used to carry books and sometimes other supplies such as notebooks, ring binders and file folders, particularly by students. The bag and the book are not so far apart. Both are made of paper and both are made to carry things, one, words and ideas, and the other, whatever can fit or be carried in the bag. This “book bag” brings together both the armature and straps of a paper bag and a book whose binding has been sewed off. The bag literally carries the book.

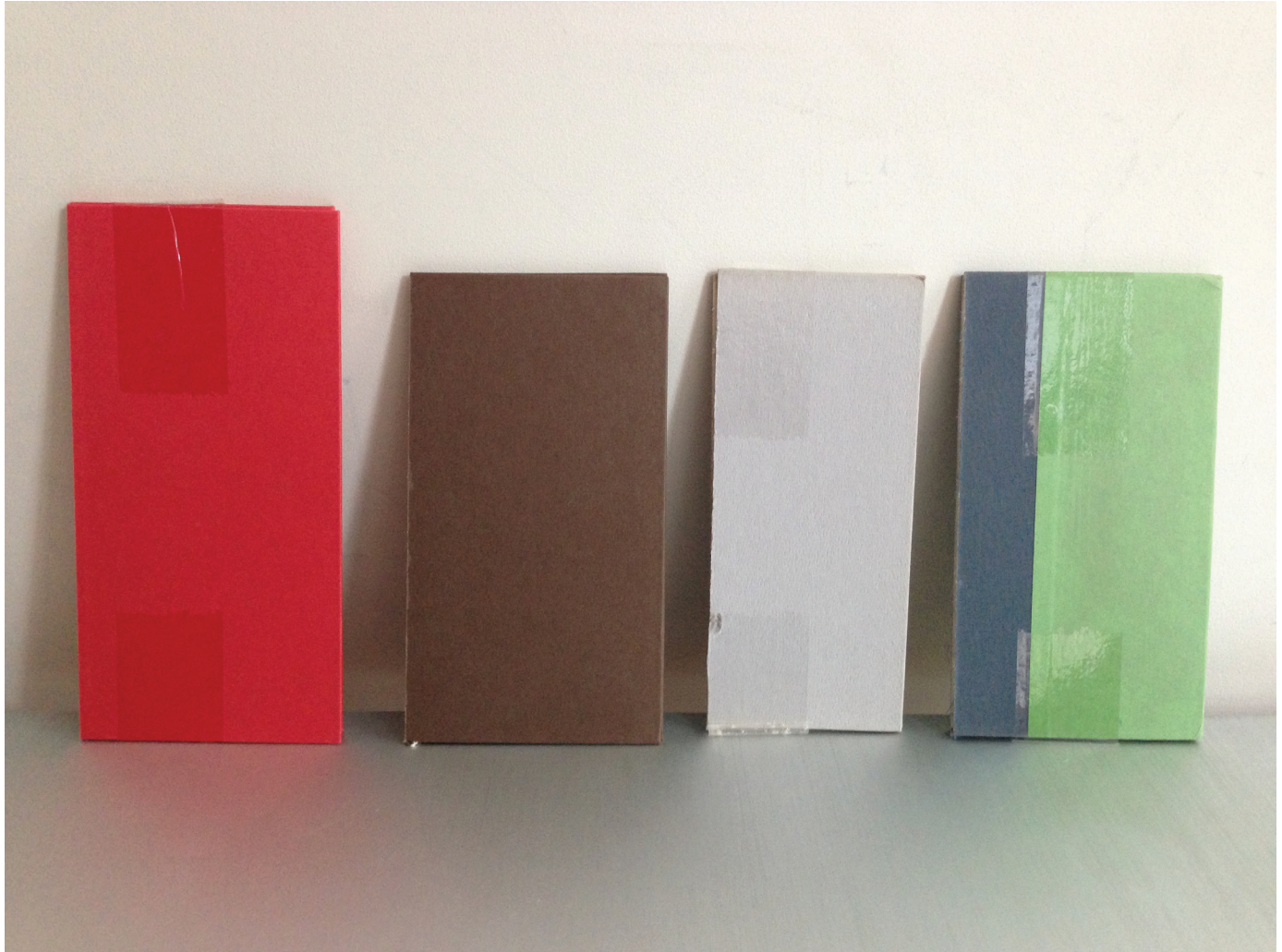


Sail, without Binding, Words on the Wind



Loose sheets of select books, unbound, unmoored, wandering, without binding find themselves in the shape of a boat, set sail.

Here, sections of pages cut out from books become unmoored words, pages outside linearity, back to words themselves . . . set sail into the unknown.



The hardback book: its hard cover often was printed with neither the title nor the image, but had a wrapper around it with image and title. Here as material objects have a presence unto themselves.

16

**Art
as
Invention**

In 2008, I spent a month teaching a summer class at Berkeley Carroll summer camp for eleven to fifteen year olds, entitled “Art as Invention, Art as Instructions.” I wanted to convey to students, by doing, this idea and feeling of art as an event of surprised recognition. Every day, we would work with existing known art works, deforming them to produce new kinds of semblance. We would dissemble, re-enact, make and unmake to get to surprise and delight.

Like Zhou and Ho’s work Marc Lafia’s work is also incomplete without audience involvement. In *Art as Invention*, Lafia transplanted a summer school program he ran for kids in Brooklyn to the gallery. By having participants make or perform it, the project explores the nature of art. Instructions on the wall are departure points for viewers to engage themselves in the creative act. In *dAft* the project goes beyond the usual irreverent fun by breaking down the boundaries between studio and exhibition, viewer and object, in order to convey ideas about myth, ritual and body.

(http://www.shanghaigalleryofart.com/en/view_exhibition_intro.asp?id=67)

See also press reader, *Of Time and Place*, <https://www.pressreader.com/china/global-times-metro-shanghai/2011230/281749856208322>





Here are some of the underlying things that we thought about and worked with.

A.

*art becomes the invention of its possibility
the imagination of a possibility
a space of the possible
a possible space
the first task of the artist is to invent this space, this
possibility
this possibility of art*

B.

*the space put forward is the art
whether it's an image, object, situation, relation,
it is the space figured by these things that tells us of this
possibility which is art*

C.

*art then is an action that brings forth the space of its own
reception
the space of its invention, its possibility*

D.

*so how does one go about making art
by putting themselves in relation to art
and putting themselves into the world in this relationship*

E.

*art then becomes the world, the world becomes art from its very
creation, its very being
art is performance and invention, of the possibility of an
event of reception, of the artist to the work, welcoming it,
seeing it, envisioning it and for others to receive the event.*

F.

It can happen anywhere at any time.

17

Eternal
Sunshine

After showing *Art as Instructions* in Shanghai (later done as a book), I was invited to do a one-person show at the Minsheng Art Museum. (All of this happened because of Mathieu Borysevicz, who I had met at a residency at the Atlantic Center for the Arts.)

Though I had wanted to do works with groups and site specific interventions, with *Eternal Sunshine* (2011–2012) the installations were very much participatory in the sense of the art object and the audience coming into a conversation. That happens in the experience of art always, yes, but with a work that is structured to be participatory; the difference is that the viewer, the individual, becomes a public, and rather than having a one-on-one experience with the work, the work turns the audience onto themselves, both as group and individual. The work sees them. The work is their engagement and, yes, the lounge and pool and blackboards are “works of art” and could be guarded, but here they are open to be touched, tactilely explored. The work of art is putting them in relation to those around them, to enact what it is to be public, what it is to be in space sanctioned as art, what is it to be simultaneously private and public, in an emerging public-private everywhere of the network, where all is art and performing.

I had four large rooms to fill. The first conceit or strategy was to create a large communal space, a pool lounge for the audience to relax/read/converse, putting on themselves to each other. The art work and the audience could not be separated. It was performed, the space like software was a format to put on the audience.

By then I had done a good deal with instructions and interactions and the event of art, its material, and here the audience, subjectivation in the cinema and cultural practices come together.

It was called *Eternal Sunshine*.

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民生现代美术馆
MINSHENG ART MUSEUM

ETERNAL SUNSHINE
MINSHENG ART MUSEUM
MARC LAFIA
2011.12.19 - 2012.01.05

不朽的阳光 / 马克·拉菲亚

PRODUCED BY SHANGHAI GALLERY OF ART

Spreadtrum

Works

ETERNAL SUNSHINE

Date: Dec 19, 2011 - Jan 05, 2012

Venue: Minsheng Art Museum

Artist: MARC LAFIA

Curator:

Organizer:

It will also allow me to spend some time to show you how this comes together by various non-linear and parallel investigations in my own practice of art which includes films, photographs, objects and installations.

The works in *Eternal Sunshine* critiqued the new cultural order as an ecstatic artifice. In this order mediated by personal computer networks, normative values are reproduced as consumable objects, and the individual's identity is played like a pawn. On the one side, we see the community, empathy and transcendence that the global network inspires. On the other side, we see how yesterday's dystopian world looks utopian today and how concepts such as open, transparent, non-hierarchical, and participatory promise inclusion and empowerment yet in turn have exploited individual desire for the sake of benefit.

The installation wanted to performatively bring awareness to the data colonization of the social by new media companies but, of course, in a happy way.

Eternal Sunshine is akin to a big party in which viewers experience a very physical appreciation of the artworks.

The main room is bathed in strong light, with a mock, waterless swimming pool in the center all set up for visitors to "frolic" around. Around the "pool," reclining chairs, beach umbrellas and a set of jazz drums are set up. A ping-pong table and two blackboards (for graffiti lovers) offer extra interactive amusement for visitors. "The space works more as a 'summer social' than a formal exhibition piece, and this perhaps gets viewers thinking about how social networks and interactions work in our daily lives," Lafia told the *Global Times*. "Art is always an event of becoming, an encounter, a way to be present to oneself," he said.

The 56-year-old American artist (as well a photographer and filmmaker) was invited to exhibit by Zhou Tiehai, the director of the Minsheng Art Museum after Zhou saw his work *Art as Invention* at the Shanghai Gallery of Art.

For this show, Lafia has created a space which will "transform the virtual domain of online social networks into a large-scale interactive installation," in his own words.

Lafia added: "The space in the context of other works will be an active metaphor for our technocratic society. putting social relations in relief or in advance of a contemplative or passive relation as is often the case in a museum," he said.

It would invite us to get happy and at the same time question what this happiness is, what it might mean. Is it in us, the system, in each other, outside us, in nature, or in our desires?"

Outside of the swimming pool room, there are 44 digits prints of films stills, all from Chinese, French, and Japanese films, and all arrayed in straight lines. Each picture carries its original title and explanation and the Chinese translations.

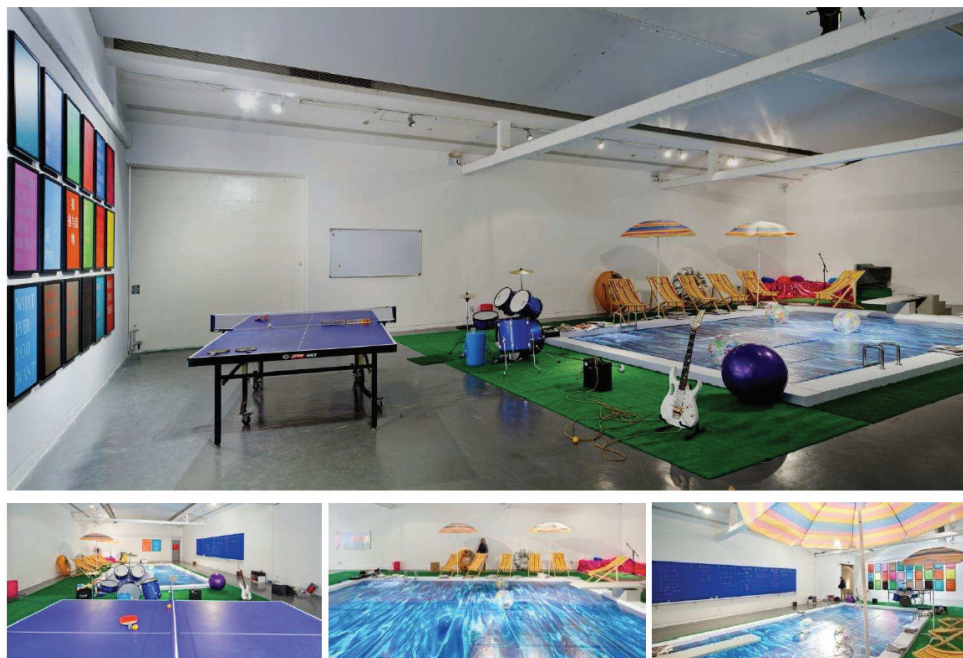
"The sequence of stills creates a nonlinear reading of characters and themes across cultures and generations as a way to explore the relationship of the individual to society, but moreover the individual's desire for personal revolution in relaxation to society revolution," Lafia told the *Global Times*.

(*Global Times Metro Shanghai*, 30 December 2011)

The exhibition had 4 rooms and included these works:

- ¶ Eternal Sunshine the installation
- ¶ Public Relations
- ¶ Film Stills, Still History
- ¶ Double Fantasy
- ¶ Self Exposures
- ¶ Chat Roulette

Eternal Sunshine: Installation, Main Room

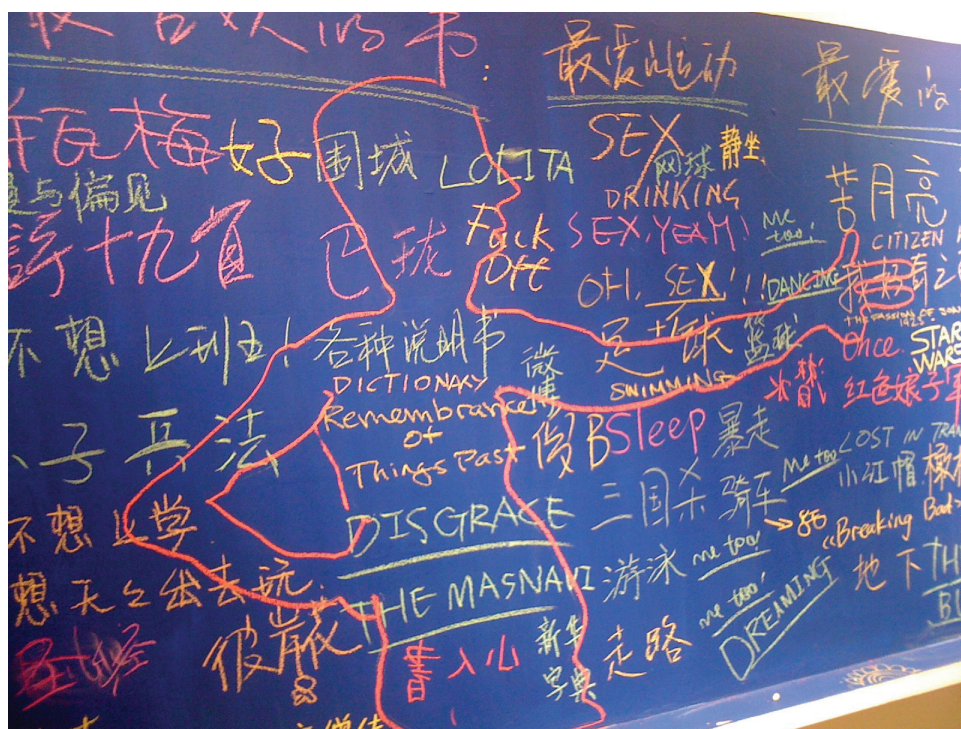


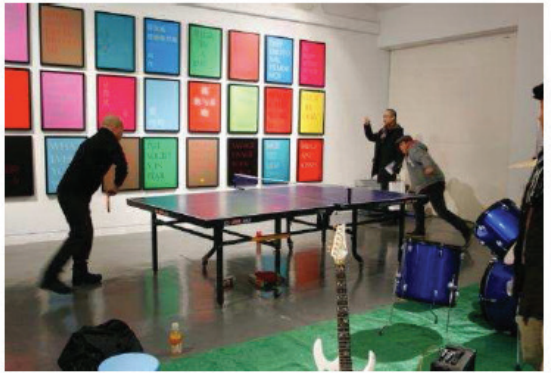
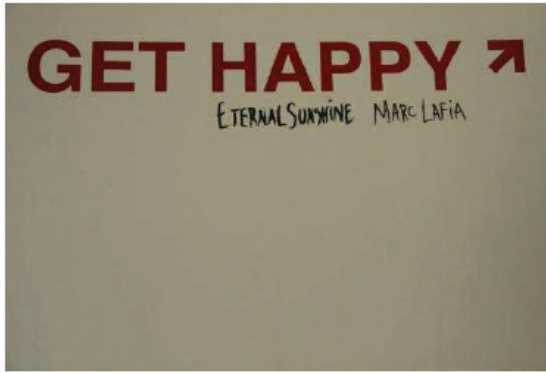
Eternal Sunshine is constructed around an imaginary swimming pool which helps to set the scene of a warm summer afternoon. Strewn around the pool are lounge areas, a ping-pong table, video monitors, an open microphone, electric guitar, and other activity stations including a series of ad hoc questions listed on a blackboard that encourages audience feedback. Surveys ask audience members

to list their favorite books, films, vacation spots, and emails. Free refreshments, art and dance classes, karaoke sessions and popular magazines are provided as a way to retain the audience and encourage them to customize the space to fit their own expressions, needs and tastes.

While this open recreational space is fun and relaxing, it is also a laboratory, a place to inventory people's likes and dislikes, their fears, pleasures, intimate longings and desires. In one corner of the room we see signs, "more happy music," "more sun," "evacuate." These signals suggest that this enjoyable place is actually pre-designed, a software program beyond our control. The signs also suggest that the environment is continually being optimized and personalized. In fact museum staff will update any requests of the participants, whether it is to play their favorite songs, change the color of the lighting or add their favorite flavor refreshment, all in effort to streamline the eternal sunshine of utopia.

Eternal Sunshine employs art as an event and uses networks, both private and public, to affect a cultural space that produces in the end, what we know as globalization.

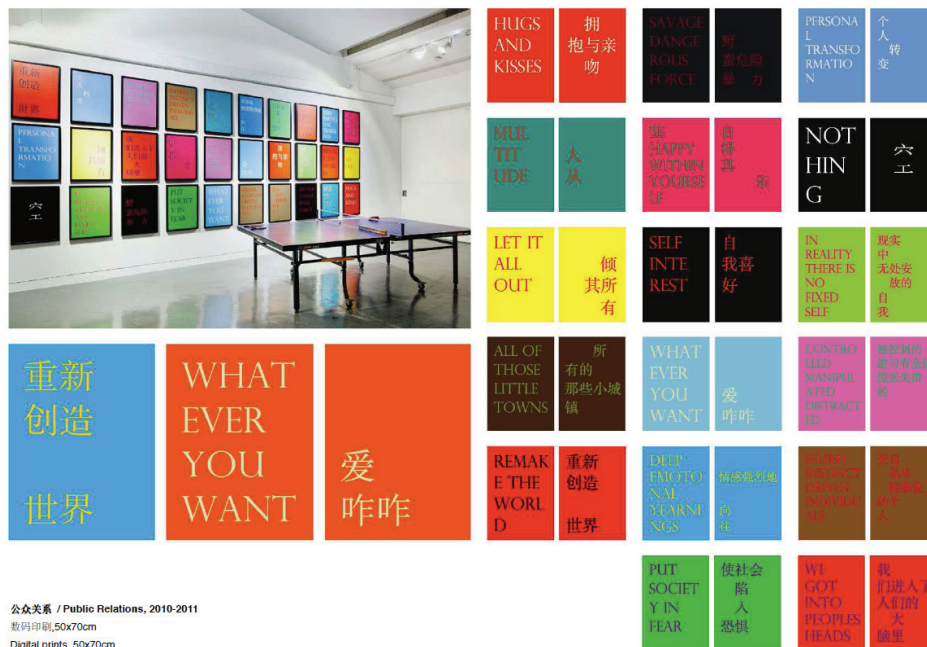






Presented along with this installation are Lafia's print and video works that investigate how subjectivities, once constructed through cinematic representation have changed over time to become a global condition in which the individual now represents themselves through social media in the network. Today there is no need to go to the movies we are each in our own, endless film.

Public Relations: Hugs and Kisses: Prints, Main Room

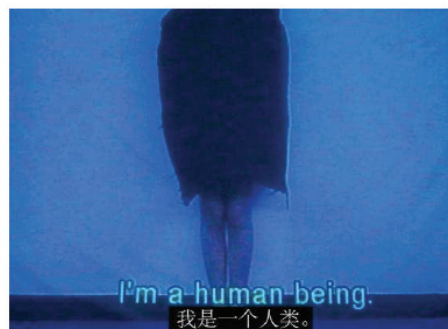
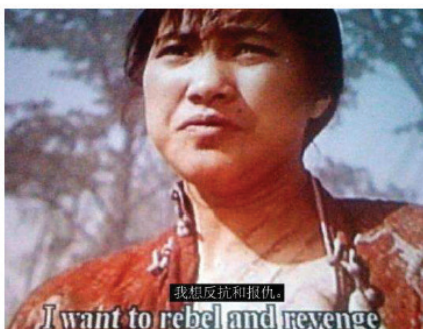
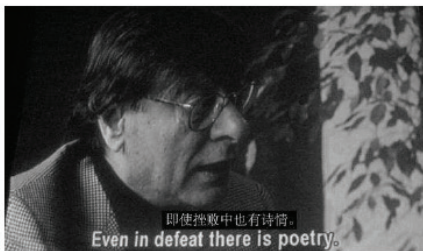


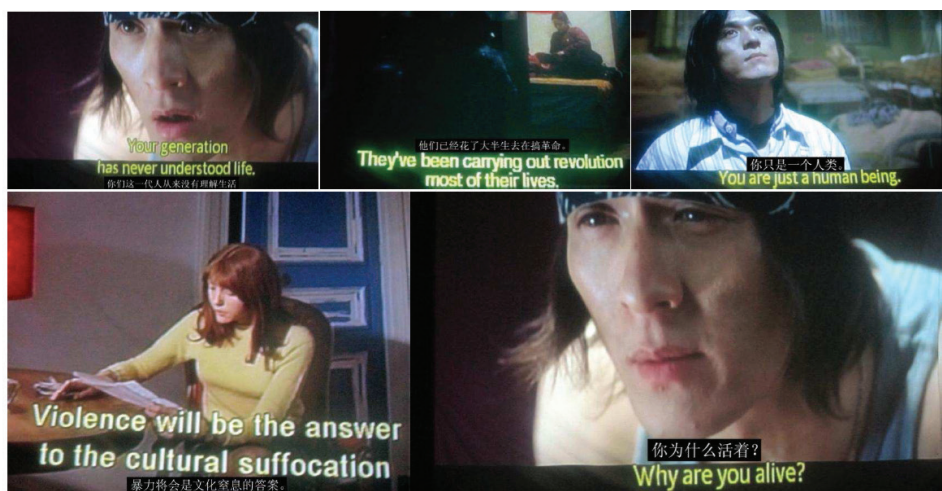
The economic elite have controlled society since the dawn of civilization. Today's elite are more insidious as they try to conceal their elitism from the world. In global capitalism, we're all purportedly the same. But just as the aristocrats of old feared the masses and their so-called irrational forces, today's economic elite fear the potential madness of the people. But rather than subjugating them, the new elite deploy the masses, transforming them into atoms whose emotional and sexual forces are highly supervised.

We live in an age of managed masses where the very way we think about ourselves is shaped through all pervasive marketing mechanisms and what's called "public relations." Here, then, are a series of color field prints with statements that address the psychology of this condition. Texts that allude to persuasion,

individuality, the social, the public, aggression and passivity, have been engineered as commands to influence behavior and thought. Catch phrases packaged for the attention deficient perpetuate the rise of modern consumerism, its role in the construction of the self and how this self relates back to the world, alas—public relations.

Film Stills, Still History: Prints, Hallway





影像截屏
Film Stills, Still History, 2007-2011
数码印刷, 共 44 张 / 44 digital prints



DECEMBER 2011

0 POSTS



MARCH 2011

7 POSTS



This series of prints are screen and subtitle excerpts from Chinese, French and Japanese films spanning the past fifty years. The sequence of stills creates a non-linear reading of cinematic history by piecing together characters and themes across cultures and generations as a way to explore the relationship of the individual to society, but moreover the individual's personal revolution in relationship to societal revolution. The series of stills constructs a pre-globalization narrative about the universal desire for human freedom. It also addresses how subjectivities have changed over time and, more importantly, how globalization has now constructed a post-national subjective condition. If there was once a political process that engaged people's rational, conscious minds with the aim of facilitating their needs as a society, society is now atomized, the individual known and quantified as a set of narrow self-interests outside any conception of a social whole. We are managed numbers who live under the illusion, perpetuated by the socio-economic elite, that we are empowered and emotionally valid human beings.

Double Fantasy: On Your Own: Double-channel video, 18min, Video Room



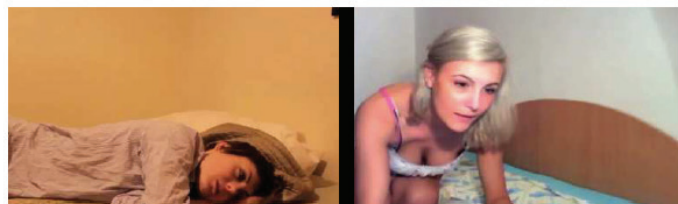
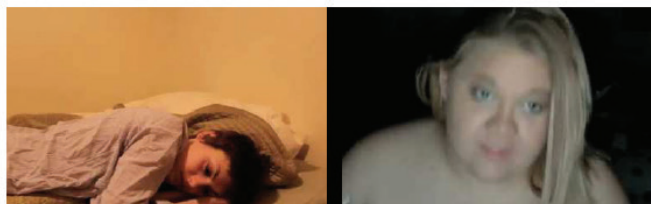
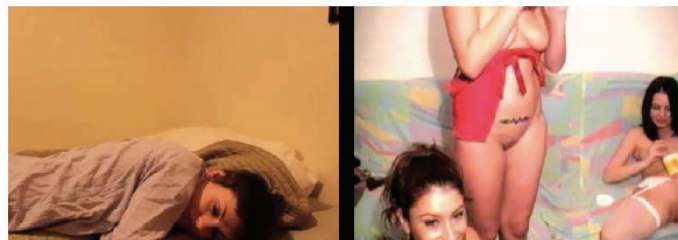
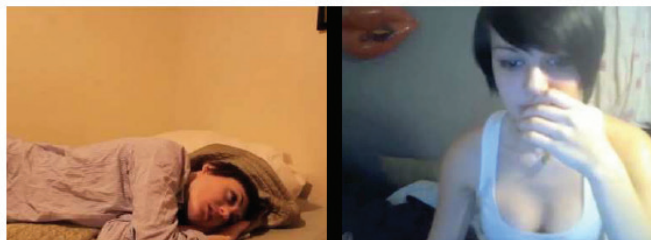
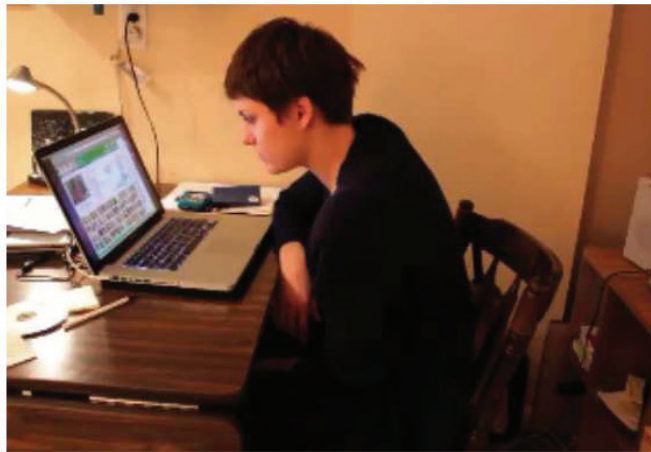
This dialog between film, history, memory, and society is further explored in *Double Fantasy*, Lafia's double-channel, video love letter to China. *Double Fantasy* was the title of a John Lennon and Yoko Ono LP released in 1980 wherein husband and wife conducted a musical dialogue. In Lafia's work distinct cultures prior to globalization look at one another via cinematic montage. The juxtapositions of film and news footage clips lead to a series of productive misrecognitions, phantasms and mirroring wherein each culture becomes a promise to the other for a better world.

In *Quitting* a film set in the late '90's Beijing, actor Jia Hongsheng believes John Lennon to be his spiritual father. Jia Hongsheng's personal revolt, his struggle with himself eventually leads to his suicide and foreshadows a turn in subjectivity for 20th century China- from being part of a social collective to a self that's alone with that vast interior of the unknowable self. The identification of Jia with John Lennon is mirrored in Godard's *La Chinoise* (1967). Here Mao's little red book is employed as a source of historical analysis and inspiration for the '68 Parisian

student revolt. This French avant-garde masterpiece is quite distinct from the critical portrayal of the Cultural Revolution seen through the eyes of Tian Zhuangzhuang in his film *The Blue Kite* (1992). Here Mao's revolt is a source of personal tragedy as the desire of a family to acquire more leisure and culture is violently repudiated by the collective. Zhu Xijuan in *The Red Detachment of Women* (1961), is a young revolutionary peasant in search of self-consciousness while Anne Wiazemsky in *La Chinoise*, is a young, self-conscious, bourgeoisie, youth in search of revolution.

The final sequence of Lafia's *Double Fantasy* summarizes the conundrum of this revolutionary, cross-cultural desire. On one side news clips show Mao Zedong promoting the great proletarian revolution to thousands of followers. On the other side we see a concert clip of The Beatles performing their famous song, "Revolution," which renounces Mao, and violent revolt with the lyrics "But if you go carrying pictures of Chairman Mao / You ain't going to make it with anyone anyhow." The double fantasy of historical consciousness is complete.

Hi How Are You Guest 10497: Video



Hi How are You Guest 10497 brings us back into a contemporary moment, where one can reach out across the world wide web to connect to other 'private' spaces. In this video work, a woman, living alone in Manhattan, tries to find a way out of her solitude through connections in the strange new world of the online network. Through this simple departure point complex issues emerge: What is it to be alone? What is it being one's self? What is it to be a woman today? What is it to be real, to be naked, with another—who is only on screen? The actress, Raimonda Skeryte explores these questions by becoming a mirror for seeing our own sexuality, our boredom, and global interconnected loneliness. From encounters with Yakuza gangsters to international sex workers and through Skeryte's own sexual awakening the film gives visibility to how images of our selves are created in our digital society. It is simultaneously an exploration of what it means to make—and watch—film today; what it means to inhabit a system that is always recording, where identity is always and already enmeshed in the web of becoming.

Raindrop Ecstasy:

3 Screen Installation, 8min, Video Room 2

Another video work expresses how contemporary society, overloaded with stimulation, is continually in search of even greater sensory experiences. *Raindrop Ecstasy*, is a three channel, multidimensional love story in set during a rainy night in New York City. Four young people find themselves quietly in search, against the obvious, for an ultimate experience. As they follow their instincts, some as costumed superheroes play fighting in the rain soaked streets, others alone in crowded Koreatown eating ice-cream, the night becomes shorter and draws them to a Karaoke bar. There under the colored lights they see themselves on a large screen and sing to the The Magnetic Fields' kaleidoscopic song "Take Ecstasy with Me."



Self Exposure: Part of This Moment Already Always Recording, Prints, Video Room

Displayed in the same corner of the room as *Hi How are You Guest 10497*, the print series *Self Exposure* explores public platforms for communication and social networks through an aesthetic and conceptual lens. These three-hundred screen captures shows the artist in conversation with different people from all around the world in the online social interface Chatroulette. Social Media like Chatroulette not only presents us with a new kind of public space, it replaces what was once a spectacle—where the dividing line between performers and the audience was very clear—with new modes of discourse, of writing and image making. Here the traditional modes of representation and consumption have been intertwined. In the online chat room the individual is constituted by a series of postures and probing. As the artist states “‘I’ am the photographer’s eyes, the viewfinder, I am the object and its double, the subject that constitutes myself for its own consumption. I affirm and author myself. I arouse myself. I narrate myself. I become myself in the image.

I use the pose as a carnival to myself, of myself, for myself, to supersede any other possible definitions of me, to indeed define myself."

This kind of encounter is at once a collective and an isolated incident, a private experience within the communal network. These prints record this society of individual moments, a network of fragmented selves that nonetheless are not fragmented. As artworks the prints address questions of what and where performance space, public space, and institutional space is. It also questions the act of photography itself by presenting portraiture as a double wherein the hierarchy of photographer and subject, the seen and being seen, has collapsed.



18

Blackboards

I became fascinated with the idea of narration, where it happens and how. I had for some time been thinking about rules-based art, algorithms; a database cinema which I had been using in varied projects. But I wanted to proceed with these ideas in another way, procedurally, not literally. I wanted to engage these strategies as approaches to shape and perform narrative

Filter the Public: Shanghai World Financial Center (2014)

These colorful blackboards solicit audience feedback, creativity, and self-expression within a public context. It is a handmade, micro manifestation of the social media networks that have pervaded our lives. Listed on the boards are surveys which ask audience members to list their favorite books, films, vacation spots, as well as intimate desires and fantasies.

Some of these questions are tailored to the visitors and workers who will pass by here daily. These questions are merely a conduit to encourage visitors to release the tension of their workday, as well as a way to express and publish themselves within the public domain. *Art as Invention 3 (Public Relations)* is an active metaphor for the social relations within our technocratic, globalized society.

I returned to the blackboard of *Eternal Sunshine* in a number of my projects.



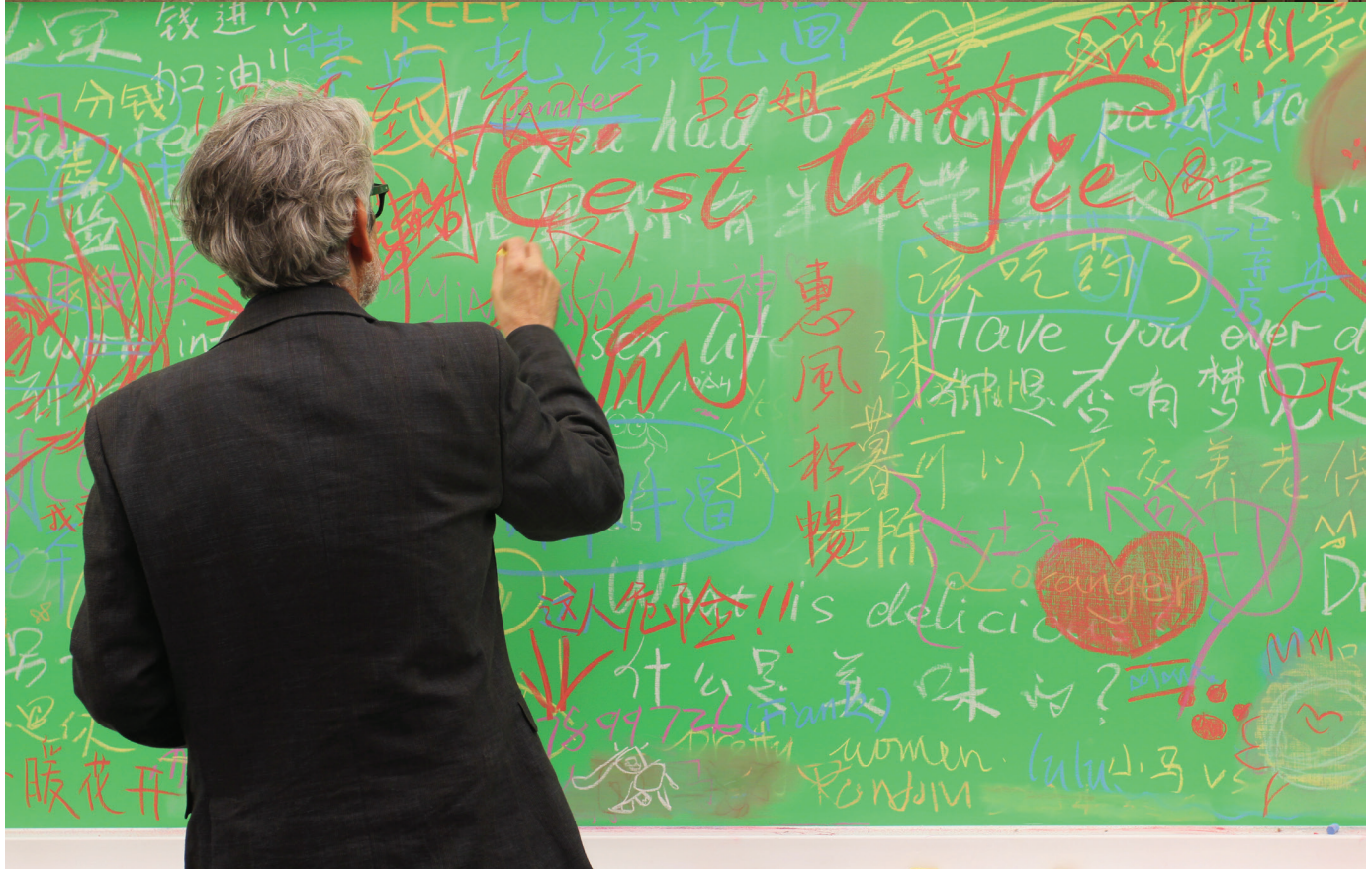
艺术如同发明之三 (公共关系) *Art as Invention 3 (Public Relations)*
三块黑板, 彩色粉笔 3 Blackboards, colored chalk
2 x 5 m / 件 pc
2013

在社交媒体蔓延于我们生活各处的今天, 这三块手制的彩色黑板正是一个微型的模拟企划, 期待看观众在公共语境下的反馈、创造和自发表达。黑板上罗列着的问题涉及参与者喜爱的书籍、电影、度假胜地, 甚至一些私密的渴望和幻想。其中几则更是为日常通勤途中的行人和工作者量身而制。它不仅得以释放宣泄压力的管道, 更能成为人们在公共领域表达和发布自我的交流媒介。作品《艺术如同发明之三 (公共关系)》正是在今天这样一个全球化、技术化社会中对社会组织关系的有机象征。

马克·拉非亚是一位纽约艺术家及电影工作者, 其作品曾参展于伦敦泰特现代美术馆、纽约惠特尼美术馆、美国沃克艺术中心和巴黎蓬皮杜艺术中心等国际艺术机构。

These colorful blackboards solicit audience feedback, creativity, and self-expression within a public context. It is a handmade, micro manifestation of the social media networks that have pervaded our lives. Listed on the boards are surveys, which ask audience members to list their favorite books, films, vacation spots, as well as intimate desires and fantasies. Some of these questions are tailored to the visitors and workers who will pass by here daily. These questions are merely a conduit to encourage visitors to release the tension of their workday, as well as a way to express and publish themselves within the public domain. *Art as Invention 3 (Public Relations)* is an active metaphor of the social relations within our technocratic, globalized society.

Marc Lafia is a NYC based artist and filmmaker whose works have been exhibited by the Tate Modern, Whitney Museum, Walker Art Center, Pompidou Center, etc.



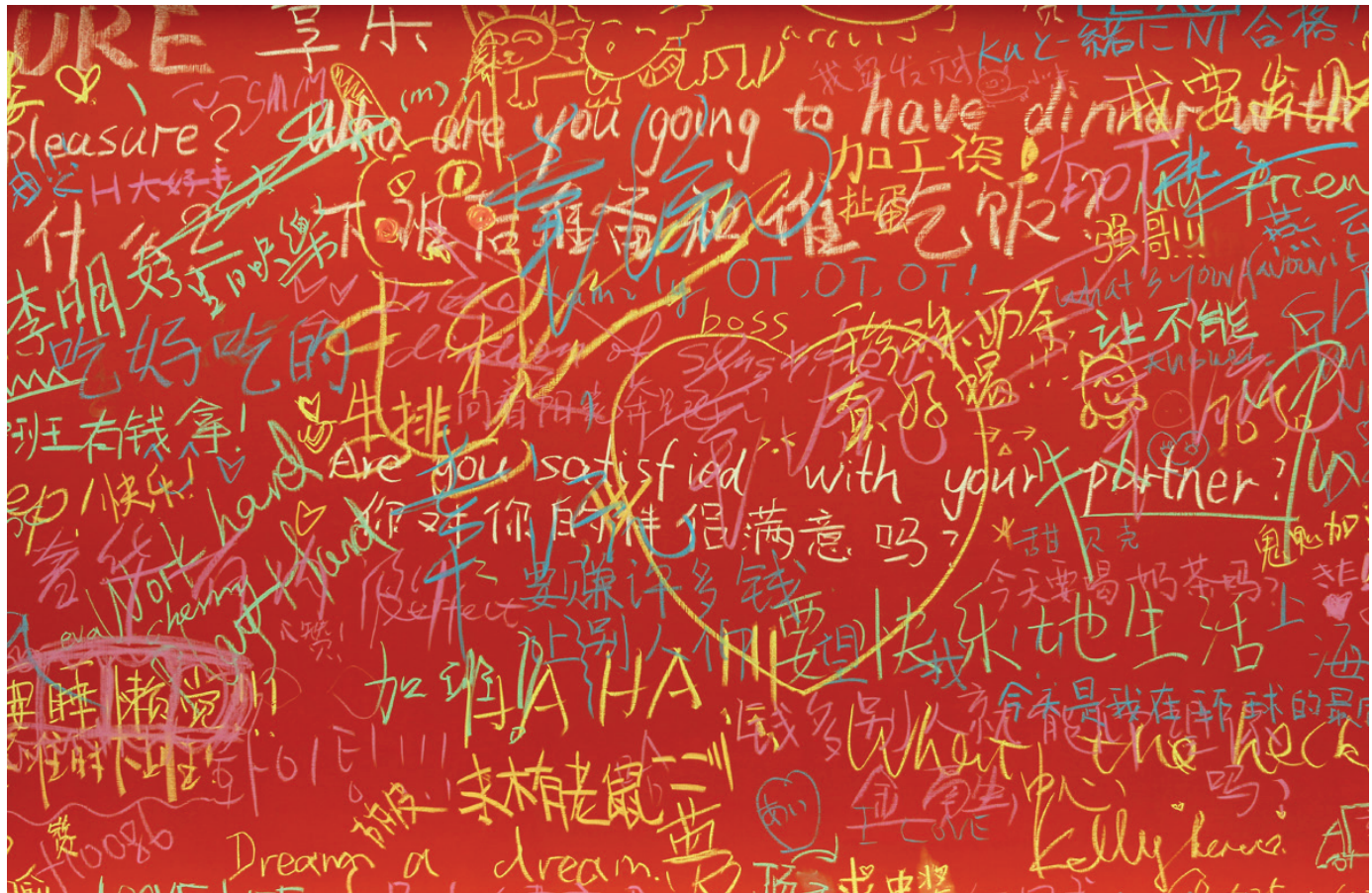






Art as Instructions 3: Shenzhen Sculpture Biennale, “We Have Never Participated” (2014)

Here, instructions are foregrounded. Language becomes not just an object, but an index, a performance. The blackboard, like a social site, is open, inviting and variable, but constraining, redoubling the experience we have online.









On the occasion of being in the 8th annual Shenzhen Biennale and presenting the work *Art as Instructions: Public Relations*, I was to have a public conversation about the work with another artist. In preparation, I asked the director, Marko Daniel, what it was he wanted me to share with the audience. Over email, he sent me a few questions which prompted me to more consciously think through this work which I had presented variations of at the Shanghai Gallery of Art, The Minsheng Museum of Art and the Shanghai World Financial Center. I wrote my answers to his questions in a series of line by line thoughts, and, as such, I have left them that way in what follows.

Participatory art can also be as simple as U.S. artist Marc Lafia's *Art as Invention 4, Public Relations*. It features just three colored chalk boards that act as a low-tech version of social media. People write questions or topics on the boards and viewers can write any response they wish. The responses are both interesting and trivial. The project provokes interaction and highlights the fleeting nature of discourse, according to Lafia.

(Shenzhen Daily)

19

Cinema-Engine

(<http://cinema-engine.marclafia.net>)

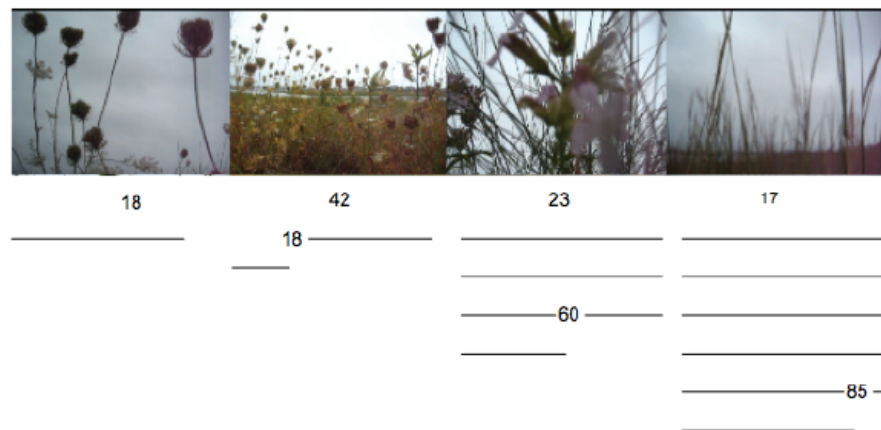
*cinema as iterative, variable, composed, a format, arranged,
sound playing picture, infinitely editable, variable, a tableaux,
DJ and programmer,*

The age of cut/copy/paste is now an age of programmability variability. And programs, programming, open up possibility spaces. They also give us pause as to what we might have thought a medium to be. Take the case of the cinema. With the emergence of electronic and digital media, we can no longer take for granted what cinema as an object as medium is.

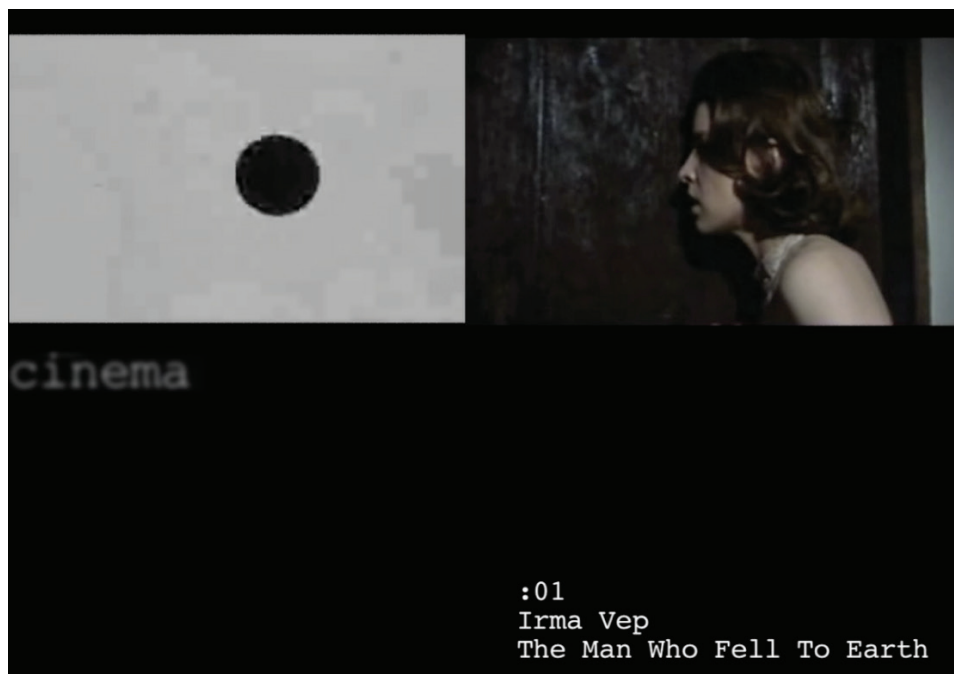
Here, for example, is a rule set for sound in multi-window or multi-screen films. With this simple instruction set, we have the possibility of a radically different kind of *mise-en-scène* and new modes of narration. (i)

Sound Instructions for online cinema engine.

When a folder opens, in this case, a folder of 4 video clips,
all video clips play immediately and, loop.
But only the sound of the first clip plays. When it finishes the sound picks up at the
next clip.
The sound plays left to right.
It picks up at each subsequent clip at the point where the previous clip finished in the
total aggregate number. So sound most often start after the first clip picks up in the
middle of the following clip, goes around to the start and finishes where it picked up.
So at 18sec into the 2nd clip, at 60sec into the 3rd and
85sec in 4th. When the final clip of sound plays, the app brings up the
next folder.



I wrote these rules for sound for a software film projector with a programmer in Max MSP for a project called *Permutations*, and you can find some of the films at *cinema-engine*. Until recently, the film projector was a hard coded machine, pulling down one film-frame at a time through the gate of a projector. As a result we've grown accustomed to viewing scenes in a film sequentially, but what if we could view the shots that make up the scenes of a film all-at-once as a simultaneous tableau?

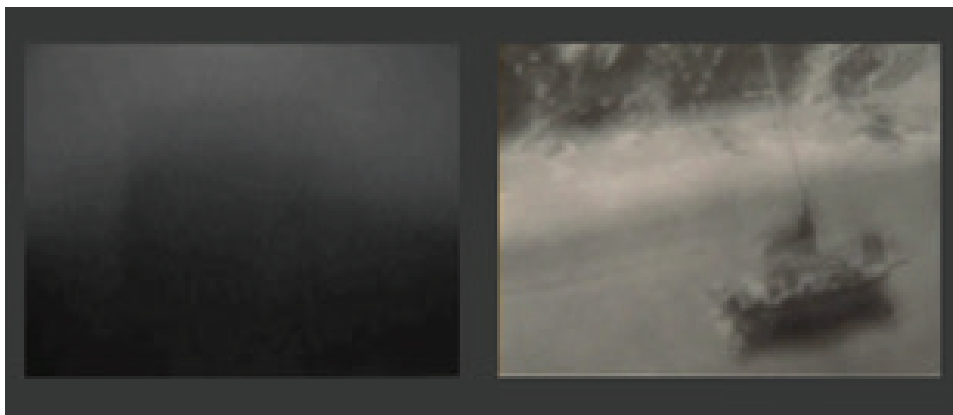


Traditional cinema is but one motor, one mode of seeing, one mode of presenting pictures and sounds. With video, the once distinct modalities of film recording and projection collapse into a single instrument. Just as software in the phone, a phone with a lens makes it a camera, a programmable camera, the cinema or video projector in software becomes a unique computational instrument that refigures traditional *mise-en-scène* (shot following shot on a single screen) allowing for a new syntax for a “computational cinema” with very new kinds of montage, new kinds of durations, multiple screens, programmable iterations, giving forth new imaging and soundings. Computation does more than remix cinema; it re-writes and deterritorializes cinema, making the once familiar unfamiliar, taking us into new territory, much of which has yet to be explored.

In the first release, I wanted to look at cinema looking at itself. The works include clips from *Weekend*; *Alphaville*; *THX-1138*; *1984*; *The Good, The Bad and The Ugly*; *The Day of the Locust*; *They Shoot Horses, Don't They?*; *American Psycho*; *Point Blank*; *The Tenant*; *Dawn of the Dead*; *Fight Club*; *A Woman Under the Influence*;

early films by Edwin S. Porter and a few other clips.

The various clips of the films are re-presented, placed side by side with another film; each screen reads the other, contrasting images, narratives, and the sound as one film re-scores the other, emphasizing that seeing is what we hear, seeing is hearing. Sometimes various shots of one scene rather than coming one after another are also placed side by side so no more shot/reverse shot, but this image next to this image. Sometimes the films shown are overdubbed with an off-screen voice re-enacting the off-screen actor reading their lines. The emphasis is film reading film, projection reading recording, all of producing new relations and signification.



The *Cinema Engine* was used for much than composing new films with older films. New “films” are composed from files and the player can play and arrange up to 9 files at a time. The set in the player now is called “cinema” and is a small collection of 10 works composed from different films. The works are as much about the specific juxtaposition of image as they are having the sound of one film recast the one adjacent to it. Other series in the *Cinema Engine* include computations, permutations and multi-screen narrative films.

The *Cinema Engine* extends work I have done with the moving image in the space of the network and computation. It started with *Ambient Machines* (1999) which allowed one to arrange a series of online video clips to compose, alter and recompose a finite number of sounds and images into any number of sequences and to save these composition for others to see. I then worked on using computation and algorithms to sequence montage with *Variable Montage*, 2001 and then for sound to find other sounds to create *mise-en-scène* in the four-screen installation, *Sing to Me and Tell Me Your Story* (2002).

In 2005, I started *Permutations*; using a small Canon PowerShot camera, I made at least one multi-screen film once a day for over a year that were played and composed in a software environment created in Max MSP. *Permutations* concerned itself with sound-image and the instrumentation of playback in multiple screens and what could be articulated and continually re-articulated

in the image-sound relationship through permutation. *Permutations* was set up to allow directly recorded sound to recast how we see image. It explores a wide variety of organizational and narrational tropes in the vein of Raymond Queneau and Georges Perec and Oulipo, a group formed in France in 1960 as a workshop for potential literature exploring strategies for constrained writing.

The *Cinema Engine* here emulates in Flash what was done using Max MSP and similarly uses direct recording of sound, discrete to each image track, to juxtapose that sound to another moving image sequence, thereby continually re-shifting our relation to sequence and narration. Though the *Permutations* and now *Cinema Engine* is a technical instrument—an instrument I wrote with the help of Luke DuBois to sound and see image in the new substrate of computation—it is conceived as a small and intimate project, as an immediate, verité and diaristic way to make small films through certain rules.

Cinema Series

The cinema series is an ongoing limited edition DVD series where clips from films are paired as “double features.” But, in this case, the films play side by side, where the audio of each narrates the other, and the image tracks create a new sense of montage. Here is remix that reads, re-reads, aurally and pictorially both cinema and what it is to see the image as a file, in the context of the digital, as cinema reading itself.

In the first edition in the series, *Irma Vep* was paired with *The Man Who Fell to Earth* to reveal a beautiful and uncanny relationship of otherness.

Cinema moves. Cinema is thought. Cinema is an encounter as are these brilliant films who speak to each other in odd and beautiful ways.

Cinema is a recording, an event of recording. There is a lot there to talk about, but suffice it to say for now that the first clip in the series presents film as a recording, as a seeing that is extra-ordinary, that sees and thinks things we don't. This is the beauty of all art. This seeing of what we may sense, feel or intuit and that art in its material instantiation gives us in an heightened sense.

The clips are from films I love, they are recordings. recordings re-recorded and re-presented side by side with other recordings, each to give sense of the other. That's the game, the instructions. One clip narrates the other and vice versa.

(*Utopia Dystopia*) was one release.

In these works, clips from recent Occupy movements, including incidents at UC Davis, NYC, Oakland, Rome, Egypt, and Tunisia, are paired with science-fiction films including *The 10th Victim*, *Alphaville*, *Fahrenheit 451*, *Zardoz*, *El Topo* and 1984.



You're Seven Today, You're a Man Now



<http://vimeo.com/32907513>

The title comes from a line from Alejandro Jodorowsky's film *El Topo* which translates as "the mole." The mole digs underground to get to the light—but too much light makes you blind. "Too much perfection is failure." This film is paired with Jean-Luc Godard's *Alphaville*, a film on the tyranny of cybernetic control, too much perfection, too much reason, creates dystopia. The age old debate between poetry and reason.

You Ever Read The Books You Burn?





Property from #Zuccotti, incl #OWS library, safely stored @ 57th St Sanit Garage; can be picked up Weds yfrog.com/nzdr7ndj



<http://vimeo.com/32918395>

On the left, a clip from Francois Truffaut's *Fahrenheit 451*. Ray Bradbury's novel presents a future American society where reading is outlawed and firemen start fires to burn books. On the right, the New York police take away the library from the Occupy Wall Street library and then clean the park of everyone and everything that had been built up there over the months prior.

Just Like Honey



<http://vimeo.com/33040286>

Two montages: on the left, scenes from *Brave New World*, *Brazil*, *Zardoz*, recent riots in Rome, Aldous Huxley, and a group of vacationing teen girls skating and swimming; on the right, students silently standing down the UC Davis Chancellor after she had them pepper-sprayed by police, a documentary on migrant populations in Shanghai, another documentary on technology and science of the 1920s and 1930s, and the post Arab Spring Egyptian police brutality. The audio is the Jesus And Mary Chain and then the silence of the students.

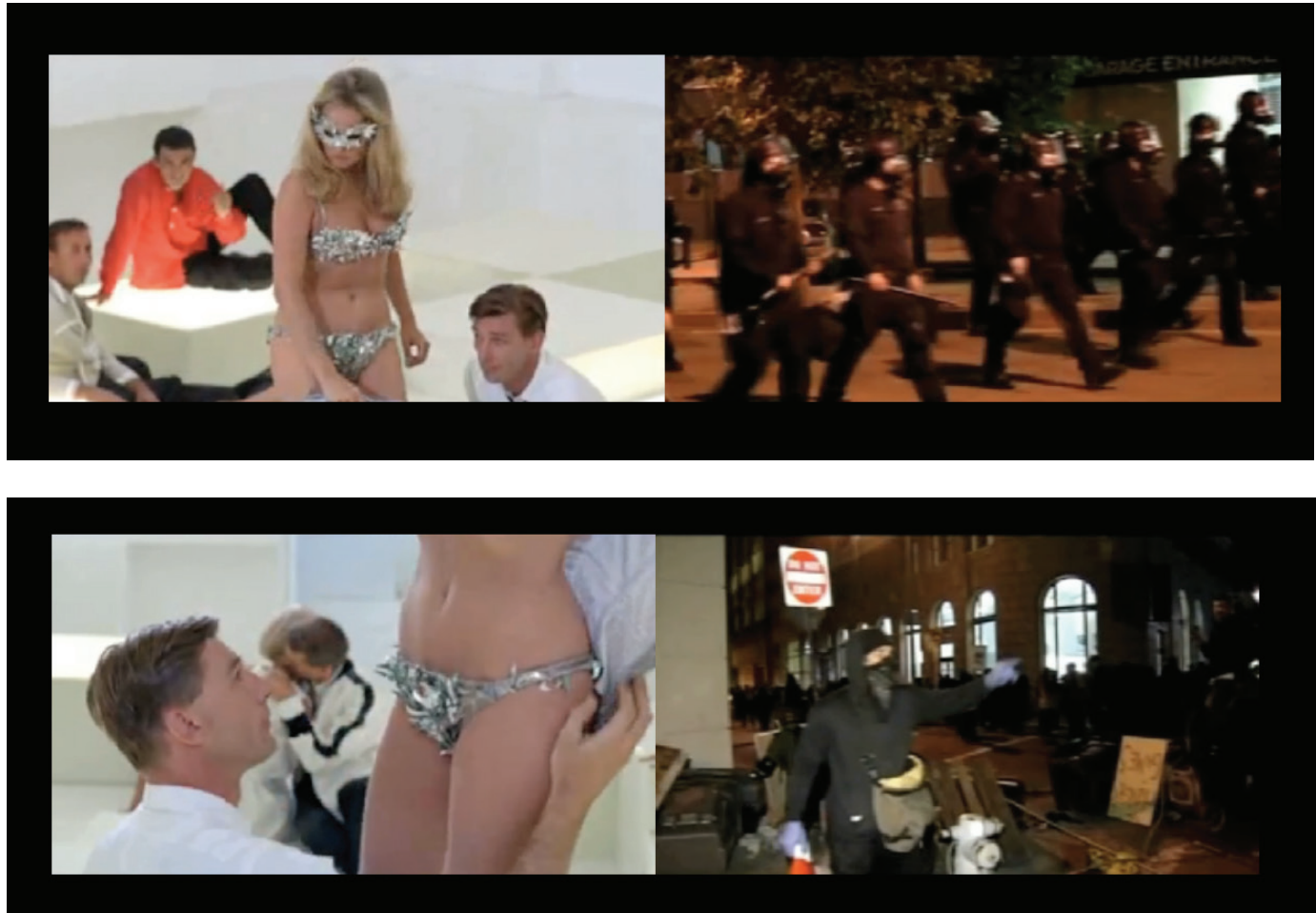
I See You Chancellor



<http://vimeo.com/32913645>

On the left, a scene of execution taking place at a swimming pool from the film *Alphaville*; on the right, the University of California Davis Chancellor Linda Katehi, on whose orders the riot police were deployed. Katehi is both a member of the 1% and an overt supporter of police repression on campus. Here, she walks out of her office to be seen by hundreds and hundreds of students shaming her in profound silence. The more I look at these clips of police and state violence and while thinking of the violence in the Jodorowsky films, what makes it so chilling is that this state violence is icy, cold and rational, it's sadistic. You pay a cop to beat up someone who wants to dialogue, and you cut the cop's health benefits so both feel themselves trapped while the beat of progress moves on, safely ensconcing the technocrats who have the answers.

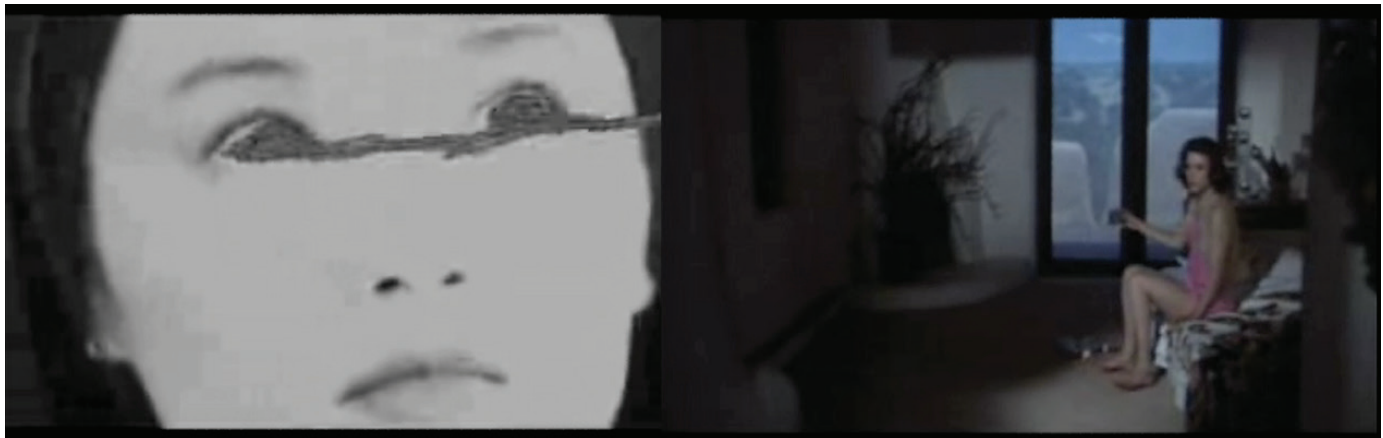
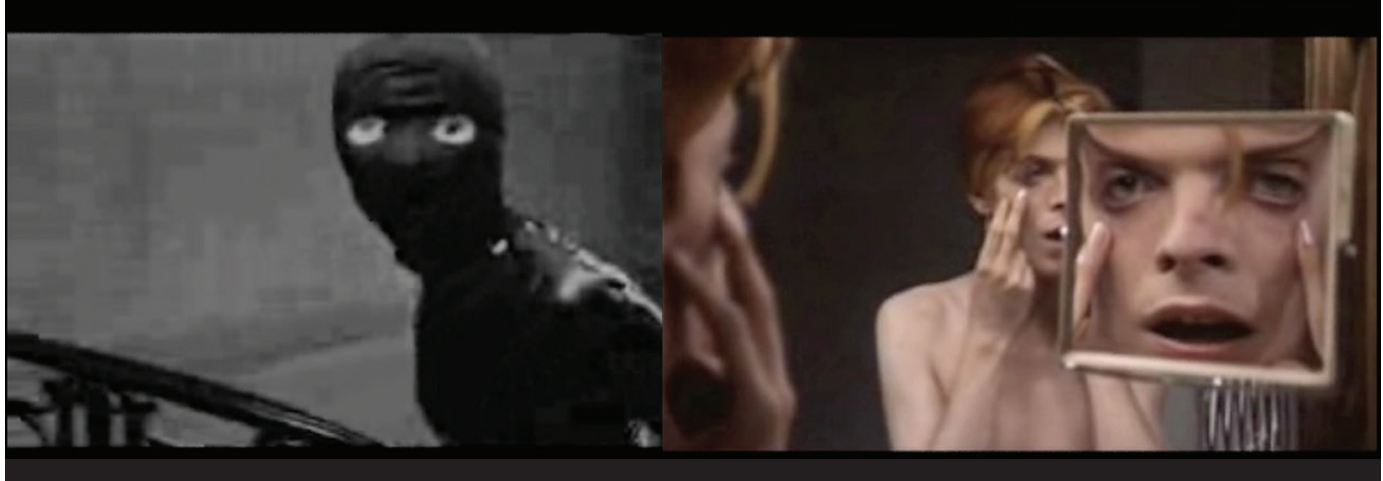
Hunter Victim or Roma 2011



<http://vimeo.com/32939846>

The 10th Victim (1965), Elio Petri's Italian satiric film based on the Robert Sheckley novel where, in the near future, anyone may enter a game called the Hunt. One player is designated Hunter, the other Victim. The Victim does not know who the Hunter is, merely that someone is trying to kill them, and they must kill that person first! A clip of Ursula Andress in the Maosch Club taking down her victim with a weaponized silver bra is paired with documentation of recent uprisings in Rome, the *feriti tra i manifestanti e tra le forze dell'ordine*, take to the hunt.

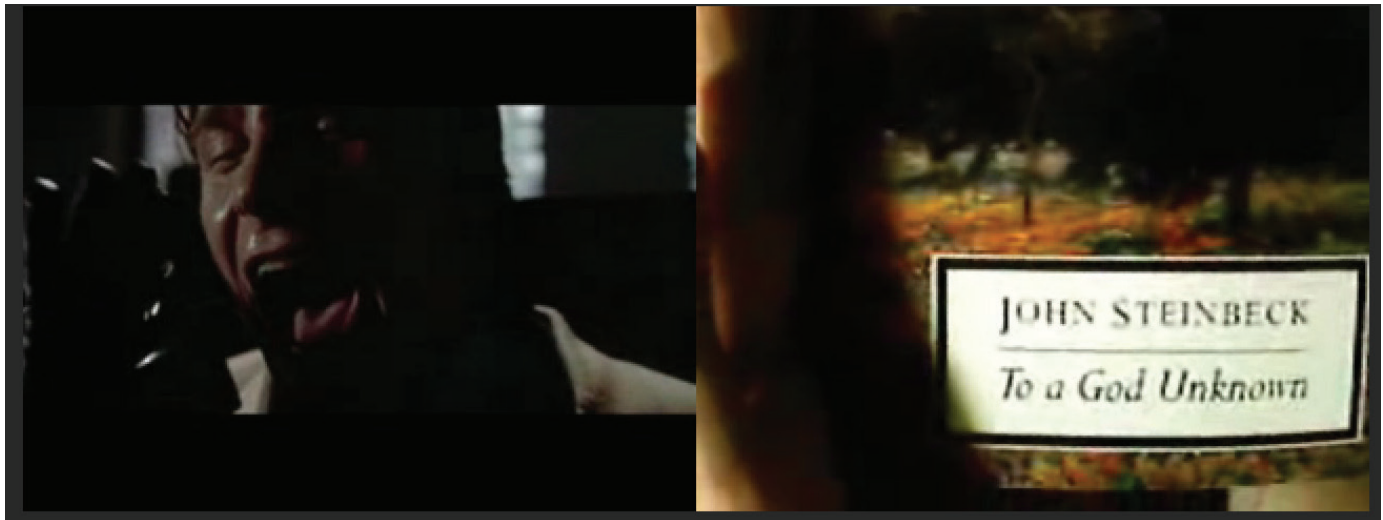
Man Who Fell to Earth Irma Vep



<http://vimeo.com/18297067>

First rule of cinema, first love of cinema is to recognize a representation of yourself. I am here. This is me, this is cinema, you can see me here, on the screen. Loving the Alien who is us. From representation to pure lines of speed. Cinema moves. Cinema is thought.

American Psycho



<http://vimeo.com/18287479>

This breaks the rules in the sense of not being a film paired with a film, but a film based on a novel paired with novels and a great pop track with lyric lines,

Miss Jones taught me English
but I think I just shot her son . . .

Fight Club The Graduate



<http://vimeo.com/18307216>

Men and women, generations of American boys: *The Social Network*, *Fight Club*'s update, can already be seen here. It's not plastics, nor anarchy, it's billions, it's all of these things. Note the very different camera and lighting styles here.

Day of the Locust They Shoot Horses Don't They



<http://vimeo.com/18287934>

America. America. America. It will take the last bit of flesh and sweat from you. It wants your mind, your will. It has its rules to play. Two great novels, two classic films.

The Good The Bad The Ugly

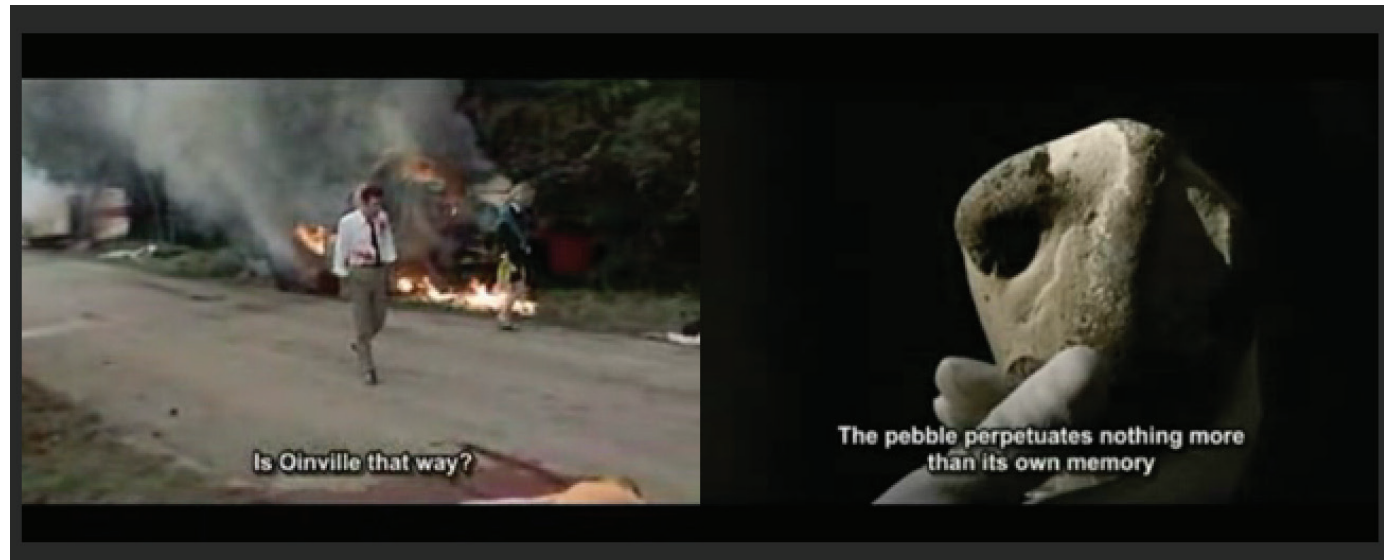


<http://vimeo.com/18286271>

Sergio Leone's brilliant *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly*.

Imagine if Abel Gance shot the film on three screens. Each, the *Good*, the *Bad* and the *Ugly* at their own speed, appetite, and sense.

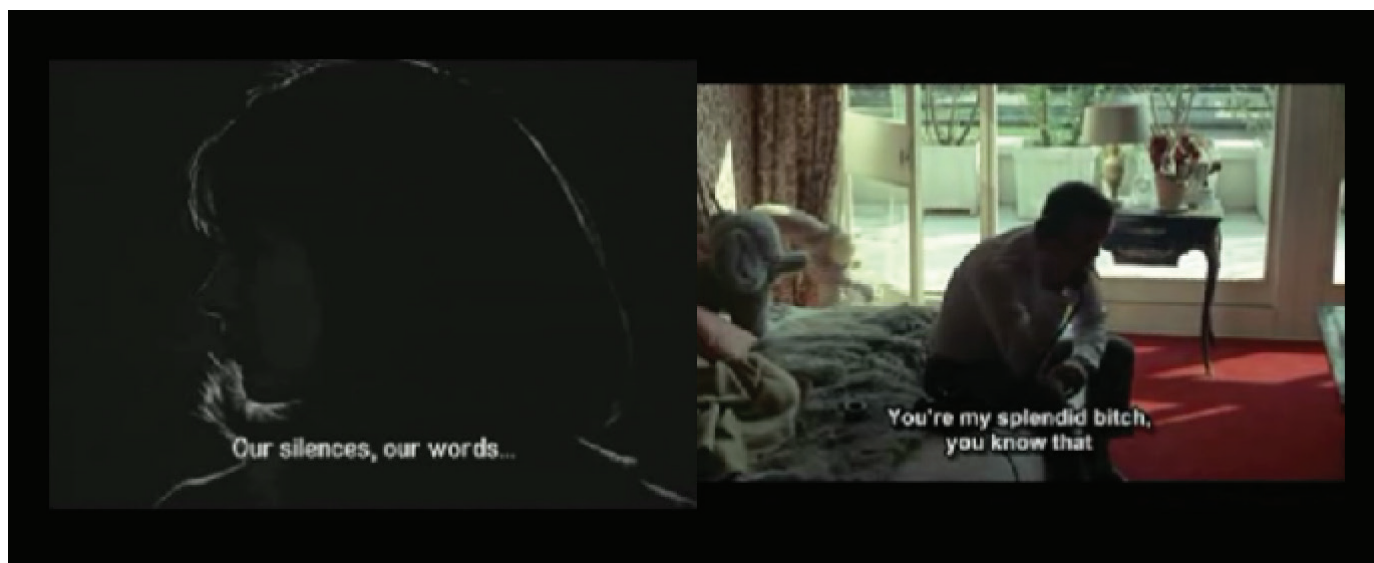
Weekend



<http://vimeo.com/18289703>

The cosmos . . . what can we say, it's unspeakably outrageous, genius. And then there's us, who simultaneously know it's much too much and that we want that Hermès bag.

Alphaville Weekend



<http://vimeo.com/18300849>

An absolute testament to love, language, poetry. A polemic against control society. A detest with consumer society. From the eyes, from touch to the cosmos. It is all a miracle, a poem. Then, desire a fallen appetite to flesh itself. And what flamboyance, what the cinema demands, outrage and wit.

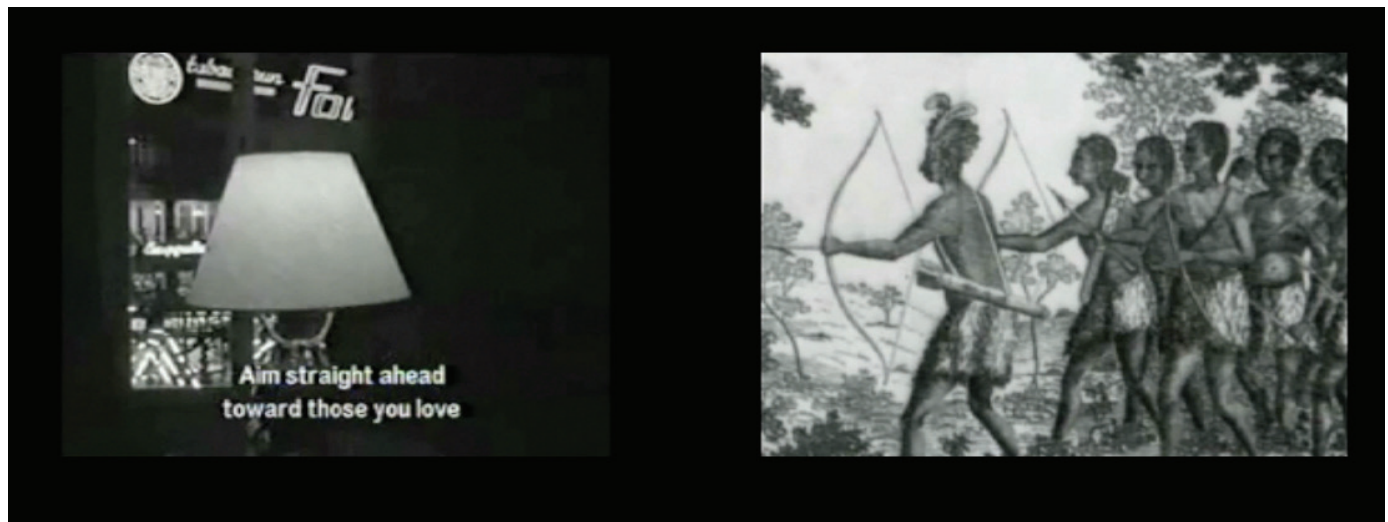
Point Blank



<http://vimeo.com/18296750>

I want my money. I do. That's what I want. And if not, *There Will Be Blood*. *Wise Blood*, a very fine double bill there.

Aim Straight Ahead



<http://vimeo.com/33039912>

On the left, a scene from *Alphaville* cut in with preceding frames from an Adam Curtis documentary; on the right, a montage working within the framework of the opening montage of *Notre Musique*, part of my documentary on philosophic thought, Empires. I add additional footage of native Americans and music notes.

The Tenant Night of The Living Dead



<http://vimeo.com/18295627>

You're coming after me, aren't you. Something's wrong. I am so alive. I feel well. I might even be happy. Will you let me be!? Will you leave me alone? Who are you? This is going too far. Much, much too far. Roman Polanski is brilliant in his night of the living dead. *The Tenant's* music score gives a quieter, eerier quality to the *Living Dead* film.

The Living Theatre



One of my absolute favorite directors and influences. Julian Beck co-directed the Living Theatre until his death. The group's primary influence was Antonin Artaud, who espoused the Theatre of Cruelty, which was supposed to shock the audience out of complacency. Beck's philosophy of theatre carried over into his life. He once said "We insisted on experimentation that was an image for a changing society. If one can experiment in theatre, one can experiment in life."

20

**Anatomy
of
Pictures**

Anatomy of Pictures

Here, the diversity of art images — they traverse time, space, culture — commingles with the stuffs of oceans and brush.

Just as the movements of the earth and ocean — plates, rocks, flora, fauna, animals — shift, together, with the cosmic winds, so does art.

This is not to say that nature and art are the same. What Lefia does is orchestrate these distinct flows so that they infect each other moving in and around each other.

Maria Sibylla Merian, *Uncovering Spring Flowers in a Chinese Vase*, 1680, 2012, 40"x27", 188". C-Print.



It all started when I found the book *Voices of Silence* in the Wellfleet library in Cape Cod. Below is its author, André Malraux, standing amidst all the reproductions in the book.



The images in this book were silent to me. I could not see them with my eyes and so I went about to place natural elements on over a hundred of the reproductions.



The works collected by Malraux and presented in his book, he thought of as an Imaginary Museum, a museum without walls.



I could not read the book. I read it, but it eluded. So I had to touch it with the sensate part of me.





ST. ANNE, CHILD AND ST. ANNE (DETAIL: ST. ANNE)



THE NATIONAL GALLERY AT WASHINGTON

What is an anatomy? And what could be an anatomy of pictures?

Early images were drawn on cave walls, sculpted as statuary, handmade as masks, carved, engraved and etched on armor and silver, painted on fresco and canvas. With photography all these living and sites-specific works, that come to be called art, are presented to us as two dimensional works on paper and more recently as electronic files. As images we see them out of context and out of time, and as such it is very hard to discern their materiality, their scale and origination, their very purpose and use. And so this led me to want to see and know them as living things, to uncover an anatomy in them.

In the summer of 2012, I spent one month attending an all day drawing class at the Arts Students League in New York City. The following month, I traveled to the town of Wellfleet in Cape Cod, MA with every intention to continue to be engaged with drawing. In my desire to sketch, I took out anatomy books from the Wellfleet Public Library; books by the naturalists Ernst Haeckel, Maria Sibylla Merian, Ernest Thompson Seton and others. Together with a variety of art history books (including Andre Malraux's extraordinary *The Voices of Silence*) I wanted to make drawings that would incorporate the anatomies of the human form with the forms of plants and animals.

One afternoon, while on a walk, having found a dead silver fish, the size of my out stretched hand, I returned with it to my place of drawing. I placed the fish onto a page of one of the anatomy books which had a very precise line drawing of a wolf. I took out my pencil and looked down at the fish. I began to move my eye from the fish to the sheet of drawing paper, back and forth, observing closely the gill bearing creature, translating it to lines on the paper.

Intermittently while drawing, I took photographs with my camera to record the process. To my surprise I saw that the camera had also drawn a picture. The optics of the camera had a visioning of its own. The camera sees through its instrumentation something we do not see with our human eyes. What I saw was that the fish was "reading" the wolf; the fish "showed" me the wolf: a real fish, living just moments or hours ago, lay there on the drawing of a perfectly scaled and anatomically correct wolf. The scale of the fish with flies hovering around it was perfectly aligned with the scale of the wolf as it laid on the page of the book.

This was the case with the picture you see below from the series *Anatomy of Pictures*. It's titled *Uncovering Rock Crystal Skull*, Date Unknown, and standing next to is curator, gallerist and long time friend Mathieu Borysevicz, who founded and runs Bank in Shanghai.



To make this work and others in the series (a word I want to talk about in another post) I used photography but it's not about photography. I simply used photography to take the picture of what I had done, placing elements of shell and crab on this work with an unknown author. The idea of the work of art in the making of this skull most likely had no meaning whatsoever. This is a work that you can think of in terms of Walter Benjamin's aura. All that this work was about, its use, beauty (to me, this term), its meaning is lost.



Main space installation-view of THE END OF THE WORLD

CLOSE X

**Georges De Latour, Uncovering The Magdalen at
The Mirror, 1635** 2012 40" By 26.322" C-Print



Rembrandt, Uncovering The Flayed Ox, 1655 2012 40" By 27.242" C-Print



Rembrandt: 1655



ERS: THE GALLERY OF THE ARCHDUKE LEOPOLD AT BRUSSELS (DETAIL)



THE NATIONAL GALLERY AT WASHINGTON

MUSEUM WITHOUT WALLS

IA Romanesque crucifix was not regarded by its contemporaries as a work of sculpture; nor Cimabue's *Madonna* as a picture. Even Pheidias' *Pallas Athene* was not, primarily, a statue.

So vital is the part played by the art museum in our approach to works of art to-day that we find it difficult to realize that no museums exist, none has ever existed, in lands where the civilization of modern Europe is, or was, unknown; and that, even amongst us, they have existed for barely two hundred years. They bulked so large in the nineteenth century and are so much part of our lives to-day that we forget they

**Thomas de Keyser, Uncovering Osteology Lesson
of Dr. Sebastiaen Egbertsz, 1619** 29.6" By 40" Cr. Print







cat. 291

Cornelis Troost

*The Anatomy Lesson of
Professor Willem Röell, 1728*
oil on canvas

the major medical schools. Dissection became the prerogative of the emotionally-distanced professional, out of public sight, and the exclusive province of the technician of the human body who learnt and practised in the climate of certified knowledge – apparently beyond serious public question until comparatively recently. As new questions have arisen about the role of medical knowledge in the service of modern surgical intervention,

**Cornelis Troost, Uncovering the Anatomy Lesson
of Professor Willem Röell, 1728** 2012 40" x 19.19" C-Print

François Sallé, Uncovering the Anatomy Lesson at the École des Beaux-Arts, Paris (detail, patient), 1888 2012 40" x 30.381" C-Print



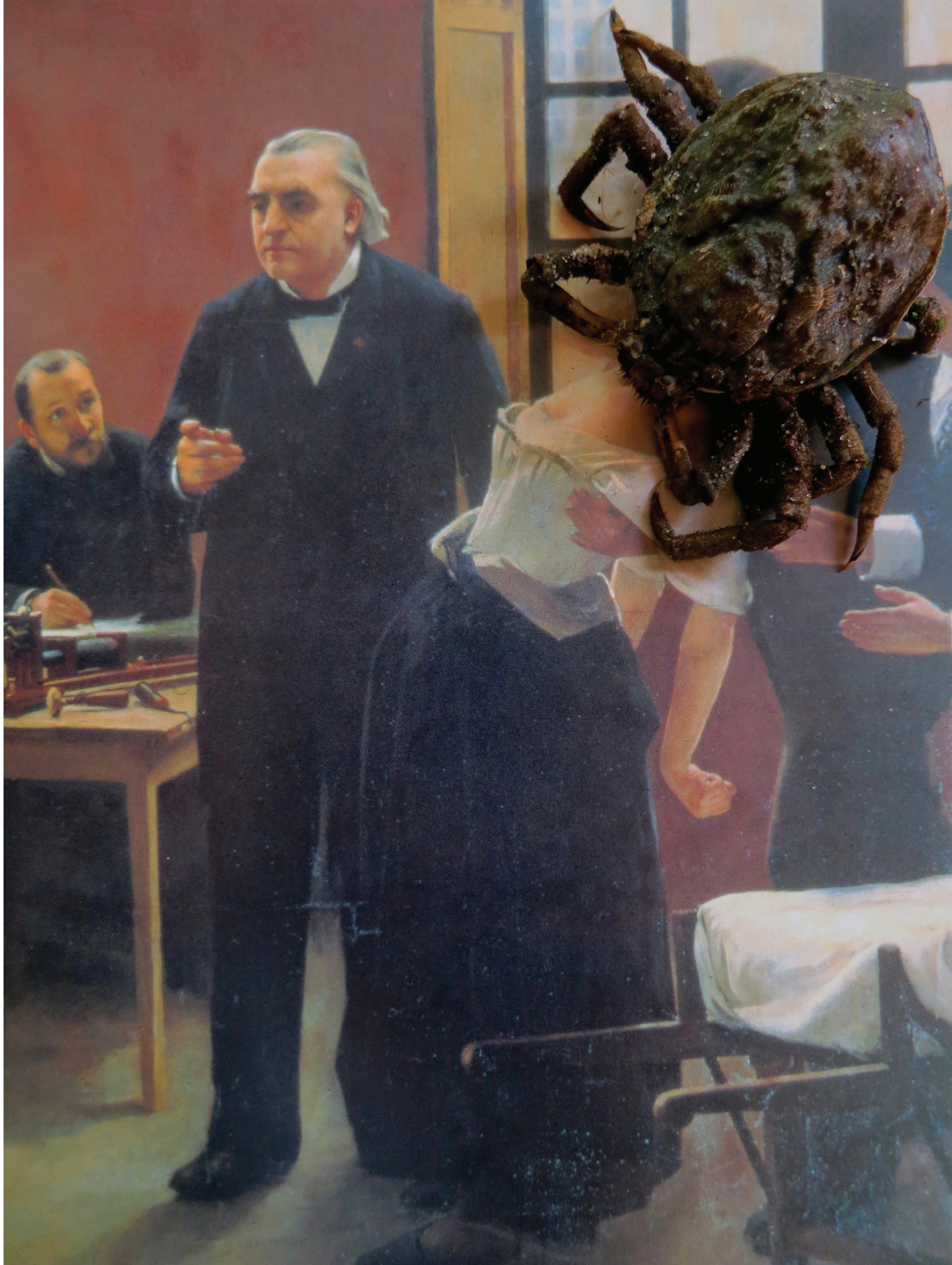


Luca Signorelli, Uncovering the Resurrection (detail), 1499-1502

2012

40" x 30.034" C-Print

André Brouillet, Uncovering a Clinical Lesson at the Salpêtrière 2012 40" x 30.198" C-Print





**Adriaen Backer, Uncovering the Anatomy Lesson
of Frederik Ruysch No 2, 1670** 2012 26.279" x 40" C-Print





François Molnar, Uncovering Points of Attraction, from Rembrandt Van Rijn, The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp, 1632 2012 40" x 29.95" C-Print





***Aztec Art, Uncovering Rock Crystal Skull,
date unknown*** 2012 40" x 40.271" C-Print

21

Tumblr Room

In time, each of us creates our own archive of images, of feelings, quotations, thoughts, all now public on the network Facebook, Flickr, Tumblr, Pinterest, TheFancy.

Each of us puts our collections (often we have more than one) in circulation on the network and each of us can have a copy of what the other has—each can pass around and annotate the same work, the same file, a picture, a video, music, a quotation—in these works I want to present an image of this discursive system that puts these collections in play. Of course, my collection has a particularity in its subject matter that carries concerns about desire, memory, social networks, the archive, language, love.

In the gift-giving of image, an exchange, a relay of exchanges and circulations accrue, where images produce social bindings, empathies, (solidarities, perhaps) and abjections. They produce uncensored conversation, even if it is most often minimal; we see the likes, the names of users, their statements of likes, and, in this, longings, aloneness, fear and loathing.

Here, there is unguarded emotion; there is no neutrality. Here, the archive (blogs) is as a compensation in the psychoanalytic sense, a representational form of our unwieldy desires.

How I approach and image the archive—a way to think of this is the bringing back the meta tag of *Marlboro* to the cowboy pictures of Richard Prince. Here, rather than strip away to get to the image alone, we want to see images in social circulation with all their readers and annotations, with the software system that marks it up and makes it legible—we want to read not so much against this legibility, but rather to read this legibility.

Here, we see literally the metadiscourse around desire and the social circulation of desire through image as these images, this imaging of the archive puts forward the circulation system of the archive itself, the software presentation layer and schema that orchestrates it.

Lifting something from one context and placing it in another where it becomes something else, seen again, seen for the first time, seen away from its disappearance in the everyday. This is what I saw in the Tumblrs. On the Tumblr site, an image, a posting, was simply that, in the constant flow of more and more images, postings, likes and comments, but blown up and printed big and framed, shown in the gallery or home, off the computer screen, something else.

Recall the concept of the near-documentary. The everyday restated, reenacted, blown up big. It's a document, but not documentary; that is, it is once removed. The same with the attribution of Mr. Farocki as said curator or photographer of pictures taken for the Atlas Group. Author, document, staged, fictitious, fact by other means, or other meaning system or system of meaning, carrying such authority or cues, cues to impugn authority become a game of ascription.

But here there is no authority, only circulation, only more and more and more, a continual cascade of images, each erasing the one that came before.

The works of photography of “photographing” the recordings made in this milieu, in these Tumblr rooms, are the images of a sociality made through exchange. The works are the image of the attendant discourse and social bonding, the labeling, the feelings of the blogger, attendant to imagery. Rather than strip away and isolate the image, we see here that the image is not alone; it is a currency, and the blog form and the identities we foster there a modality producing axes of innumerable relationships.





1F, 59 Xianggang Road, Shanghai 200002, PRC | www.mabsociety.com | +86 13564 180898





Insomnia 《失眠》
Video 录像, 2'39'', 2013



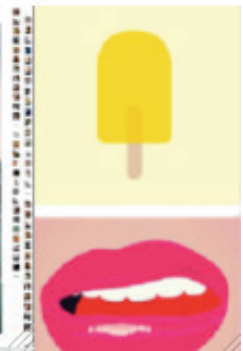
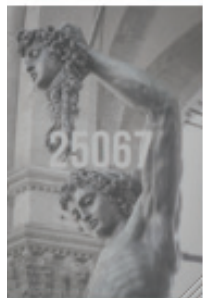
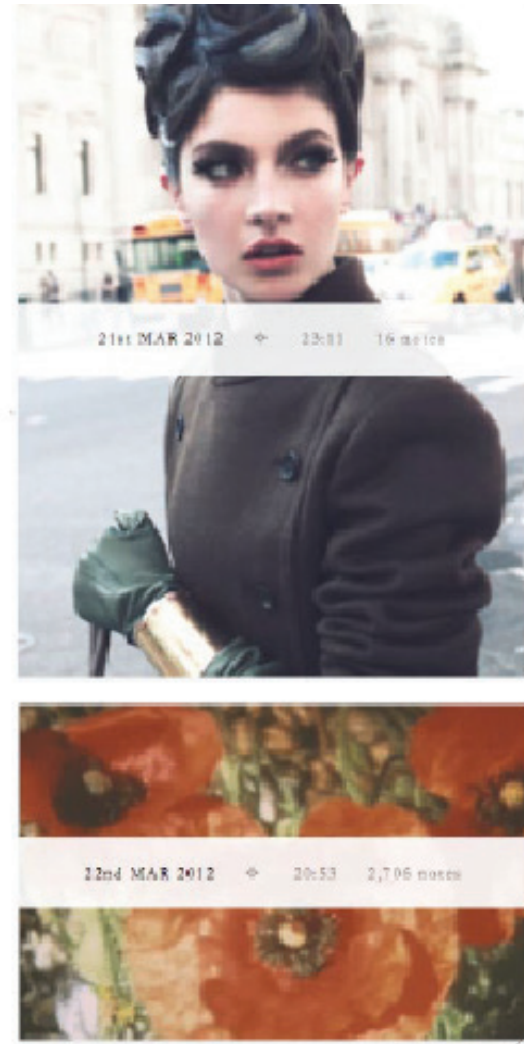
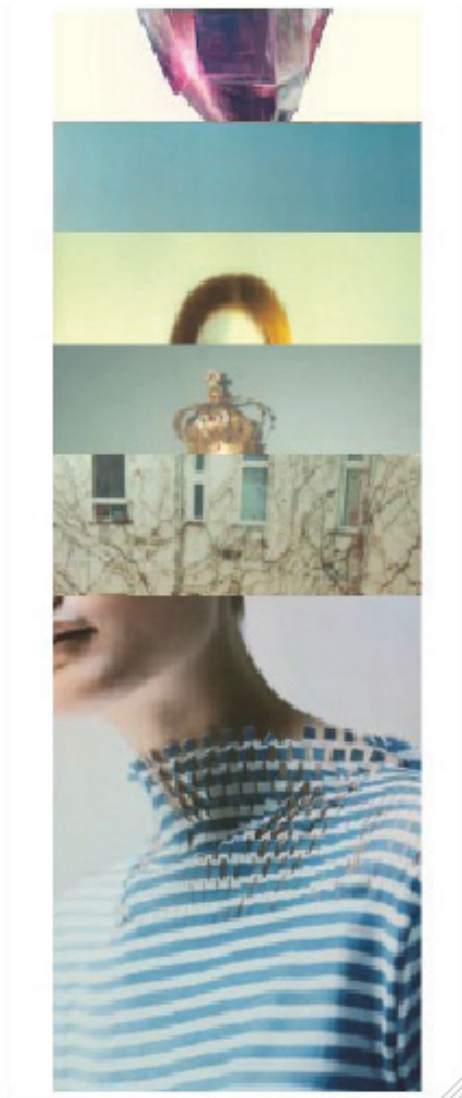
I am 《半夜一点》
Video 录像, 1'7'', 2013

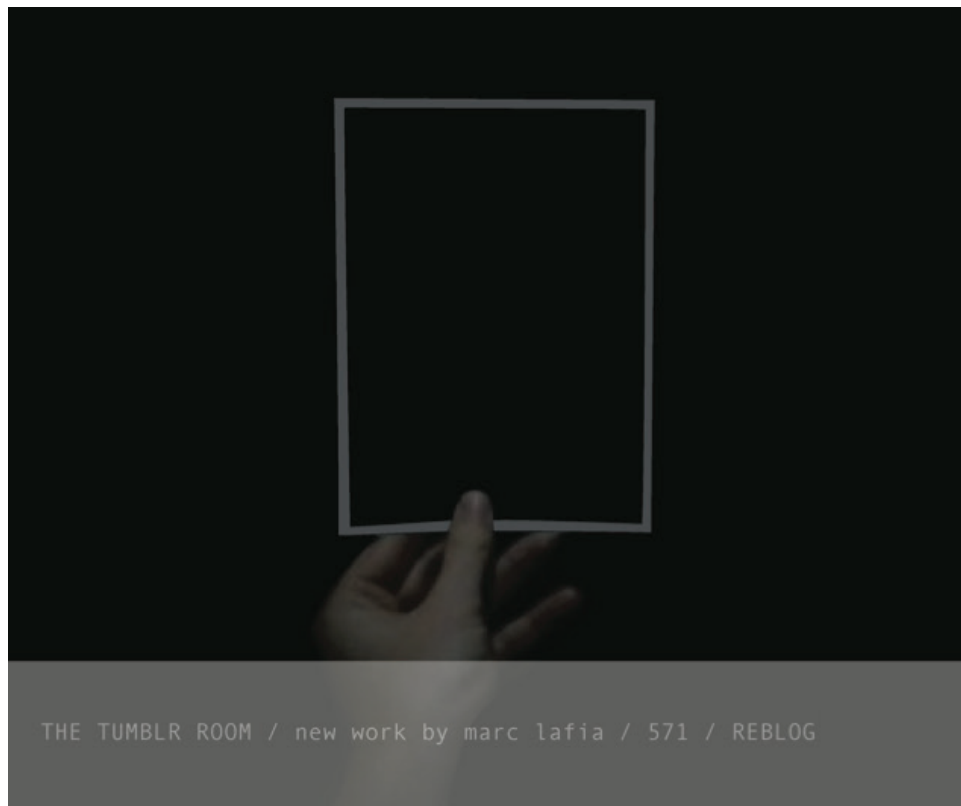


Machine 《机器》
Video 录像, 2'38'', 2013



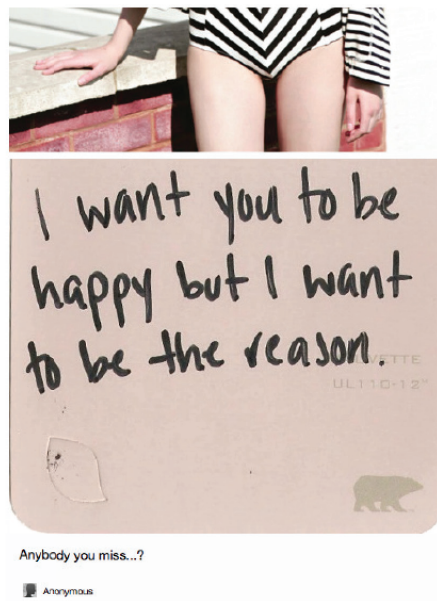
Fat 《肥》
Video 录像, 1'13'', 2013





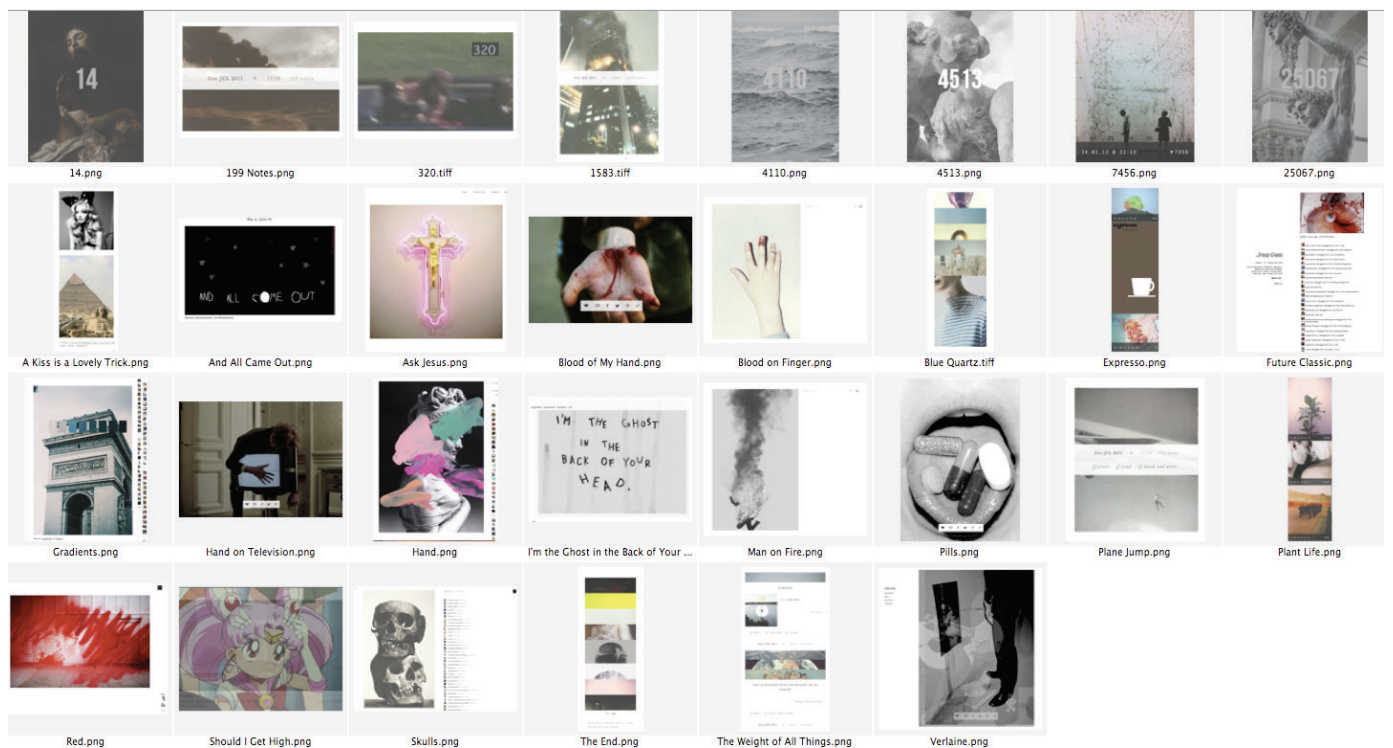
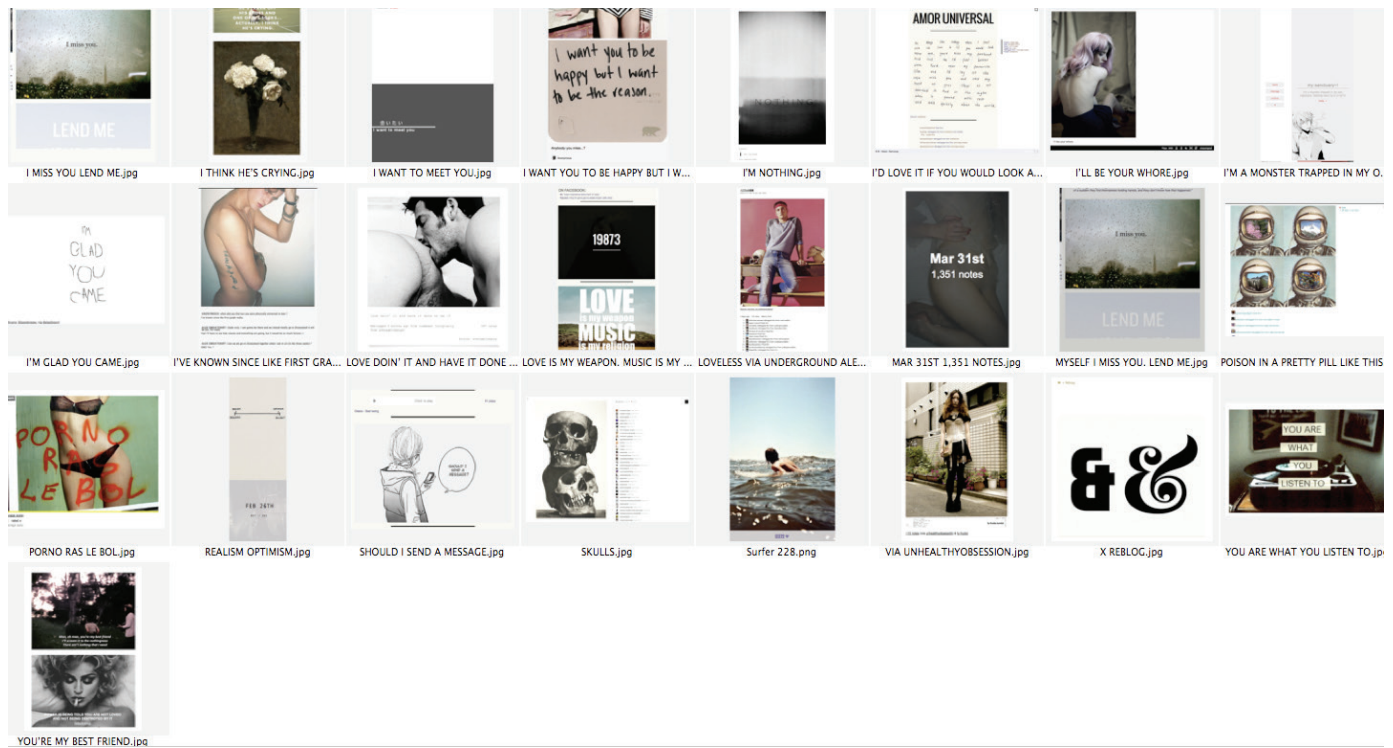
Tumblr Room

In Tumblr Room Marc explores the way network culture restructures the relationship of image and subject. The artist posits that our relationship to media has shifted from representation to presentation, from contemplation to embodiment, and from the materially sensuous to the fleeting and immaterial.



I WANT YOU TO BE HAPPY BUT I WANT TO BE THE REASON. 2012. 50"x37.023". C-Print.





22

#image

In *#image*, Marc Lafia presents new work that explores the way network culture restructures the relationship of image and subject. The artist posits that our relationship to media has shifted from representation to presentation, from contemplation to embodiment, and from the materially sensuous to the fleeting and immaterial.

#image performs and amplifies this new sense of relationship; it examines the very real immateriality of images in the circulatory system of the network. This exhibition, for a moment, stops these images' circulation, allowing them to be seen and touched.

The works on display include prints, sculptures and installation that bring together a number of techno-social concerns that have been central to Lafia's career as an artist, filmmaker, and information architect—in particular, his interest in how all participants are part of an elaborate program that is as real as it is virtual, reconfiguring our relationship to the world, expression, and ourselves.

Large, sumptuous prints are contrasted with the older material technology of the book, which Lafia has reengineered here as a sculptural object. The photographs and books, including the newly released *Image Photograph*, are joined by a garden installation in the shape of an inverted pyramid, made of fabric mimicking the filters of the iPhone camera.

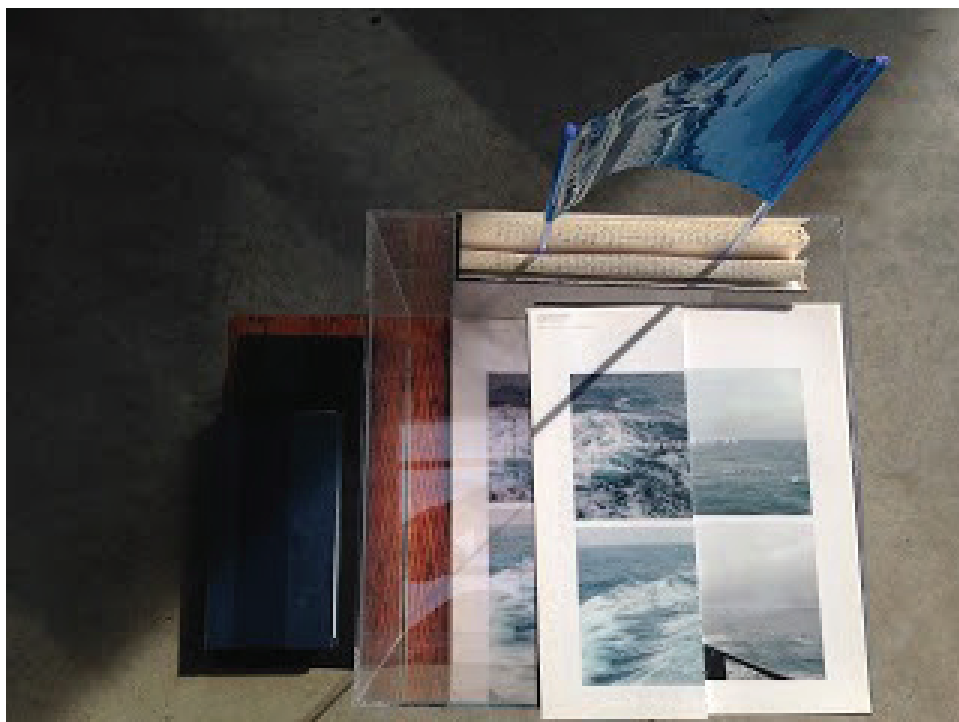
(<http://cargocollective.com/marclafia/Image>)

A review of the the show, *Taking Pictures: On Marc Lafia's #Image* for Thought Catalog can be found [here](#).















Books as Sculptures

When I put the first book through the electric saw, it felt so profane.

Books, of course, were the original interweb; the printing press, the pre-digital digital. Books were the way to reproduce the same images—even if just words—and disseminate them in these discrete containers. Then along came the digital and literally blew the covers off the books, undid their binding, sent the images within every which way.

(Daniel Coffeen, "Taking Pictures: On Marc Lafia's Gowanus Showroom Exhibit, #Image", <https://thoughtcatalog.com/daniel-coffeen/2014/04/taking-pictures-on-marc-lafias-gowanus-showroom-exhibit-image/>)

Just as the viewfinder, the phone camera screen, frames and delineates space, the transparent plexiglass cube, or vitrine, frames and contains objects. Yet the cubes are not just containers: they themselves would frame these unbound books, creating a new kind of image. The books sawed, cut, (re)framed into elaborate postures and juxtaposed with other books and objects would be

inflected

by their arrangement, with what they sit with, how they've been framed such as when stills from Antonioni's *Blow Up* sit with a tennis ball and an apple. Each cube would be an exhibit unto itself. Follow them and you'll experience an entire history of the image.

The

plexiglass books sculptures were explosions of books, of the printing press, that unloosed their images onto the walls and into the ether. The book is not dead: it's been taken up, reframed, by Tumblr.

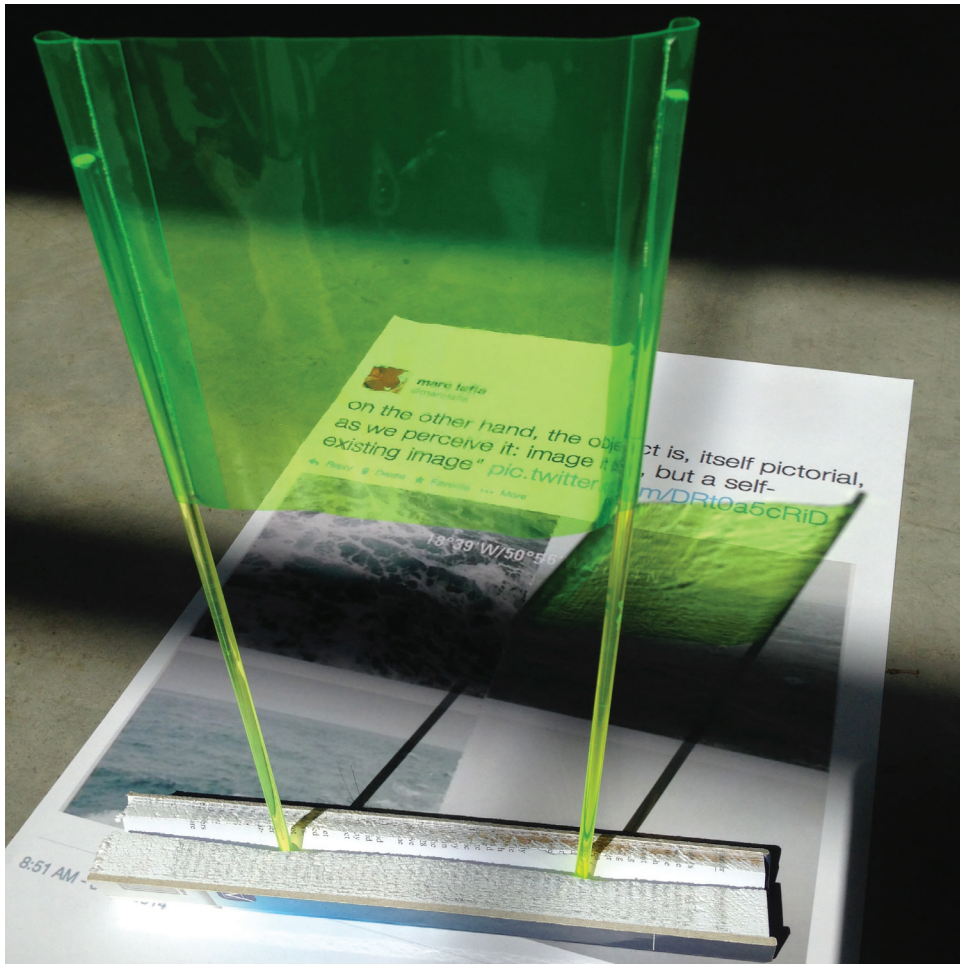
with the older material technology of the book, which Lafia has re-engineered as sculptural objects. Reconfigured, the books are no longer linear carriers of information but geographic spaces indexed and immobile.

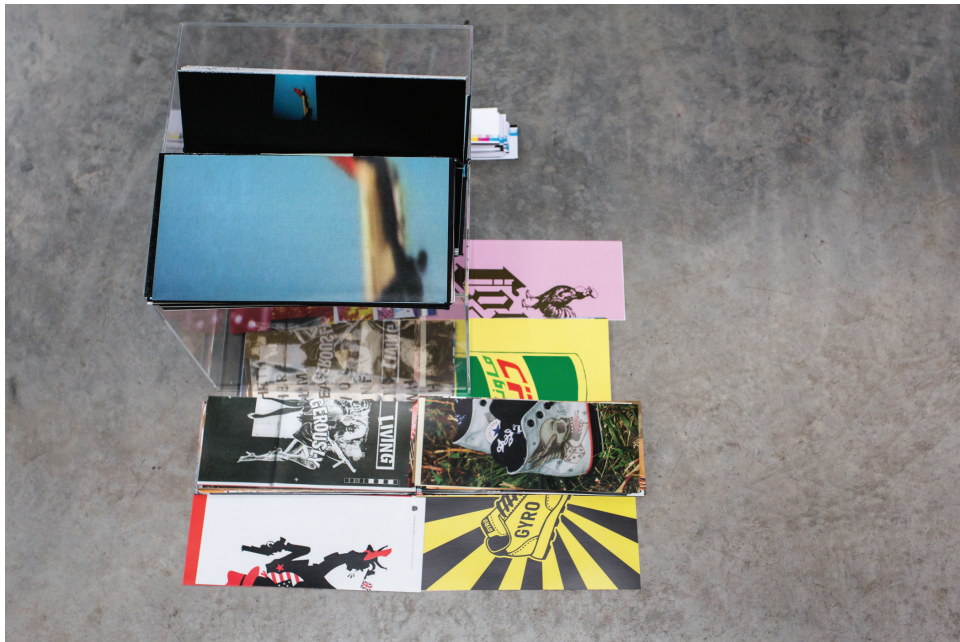












the object is, itself pictorial,
image it is, but a self-

<https://twitter.com/Dan5CRID>

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23

Pictures

open the future in order for the past to push the present in a new direction, history, the Pictures we Never See, To Create Images is to Create Thought or Why I am so Afraid to Think but not Afraid to Make Images An arrangement of Pictures better done by a machine or algorithm than Me

"If you take drama away from form you are left with formalism," he explains. "Without drama, art becomes merely an *industrial* affair." By which he means, no doubt, just a matter of manufacturing objects. "Western thought gives human beings a central role. Everything needs to be centred on humanity, otherwise there's a great risk of falling into decadence."

This element of drama or theatricality, to Kounellis's mind, is what separates him and his European contemporaries from American minimalists such as Donald Judd or Carl Andre. "It is clear that minimalist art has a very different emotional effect. The minimalist point of reference was linked to a Protestant civilisation. For those Americans, drama was *démodé*. The minimalists didn't want to have anything to do with images, but my work can be connected to a painting such as Van Gogh's *Potato Eaters* (1885). There are various ways to be modern, and various ways of seeing in modernism."

(Martin Gayford, "'Everything needs to be centred on humanity': Jannis Kounellis, 1936–2017", <https://www.apollo-magazine.com/everything-needs-to-be-centred-on-humanity/>)

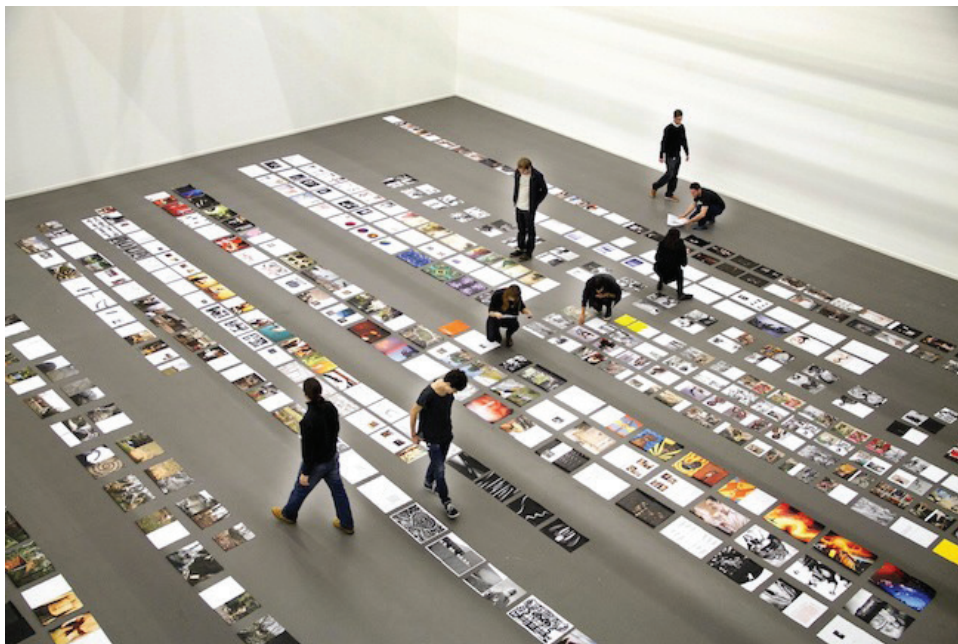
Maybe you know this work by Christian Boltanski.



A common denominator in Boltanski's work is memory—spanning childhood and personal memories, memorials and the history of humanity. For his installation *Personnes* at Monumenta 2010 in the Grand Palais, Paris, the artist made an installation with 30 tons of clothes in memory of all the people who used to wear them, evoking the memory of their disappearance.

(<https://aajpress.wordpress.com/2012/02/29/christian-boltanski-storage-memory/>)

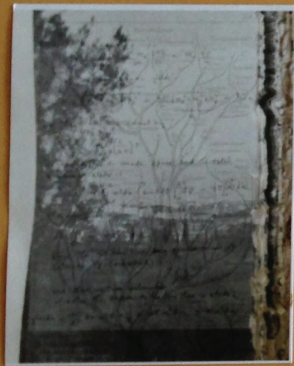
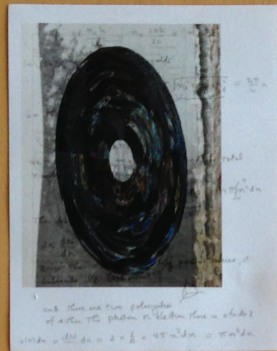
I show it to you to give a sense of a number of things; how the information is sensual, tactile, physical. How it carries with it biography, history, how it overwhelms us in its scale. It's not an image or projected light. It's spatial and distributed. Notice how I called it information. Because in the image there are not artifacts, there are resemblances to things that are familiar. That's why artists who make photographs want to make them big: so they are things, objects, experiences—they want to be part of the experience economy but in the business of art.



We don't usually look down on pages. Imagine these pages bound. Or these images unbound.

Below is a scrapbook page from a project called *art box*. A project about how our sight and senses, our knowledge and memories, our spaces are organized. In our mind, in perspective, in architecture, on the video phone and the theatre.







To create images is to create thought.

In the history of Western philosophy, imagination is conceived as something more than fantasy. It is the capacity to create images. and to create images is to create thought.

Philosophers have termed the imaginal, as an intermediate space populated by images or (re)presentations that are presences in themselves. such images can be considered the social imaginary in which we have grown.

Our capacity to produce images is our capacity to think outside and beyond the present, to go backwards and forwards in time.

Never have we had such access to the world's images, but to see them, to sense their thoughts, we have to look at them with other images. we have to engage them in conversation, in the conversation of images.

With these new images I wanted to re-imagine, reinvent time, to see it as a physical dimension, to create an object of the image.

At first, my interest was in history paintings, but over time it became the history of painting and with the history of photography, and I suppose a history of image. I had always been taken by Manet's *Execution of Maximillian* and only learned at the outset of my project that what Manet had created and abandoned as a painting was also an event that was photographed. Manet's take on the event is very unique and in conversation with Goya's painting *Third of May*, and Goya was in conversation with Rubens, and Rubens with Leonardo.

This lead me to think of images, in their many modes and many genres, across time and to create conversations with images. I began to imagine new images, to see new things, new thoughts often times by simply placing one image on another, or layering images and cutting them out.

Images in their traces, in their histories, carry forward their techniques, their textures, their surfaces and armatures, their politics. they enfold the world they come from and in conversation can present new worlds.

1

Real thinking is one of the most difficult challenges there is. Thinking requires a confrontation with stupidity, the state of being formlessly human without engaging any real problems. One discovers that the real path to truth is through the production of sense: the creation of a texture for thought that relates it to its object. Sense is the membrane that relates thought to its other.

(Avila on Deleuze, <https://taboofart.com/2013/11/23/deleuze-and-the-repetition-in-art/>)

2

Lately, I have been working on a new project around ideas of history, as an archive with modalities of inscription, circulation and in a constant state of being re-written. It's as much about the layering of these textures as themselves narrative(s) of histories. It has brought me to understand so much of the limits of what I know.

Today, many pictures in contemporary art are abstract. I wonder why. Perhaps we are so inundated with depictive images in our media that from our contemporary art, from Impressionism on, we want color, line, shapes and forms to be 'free' of history, of things we've seen. We want to see seeing as sensation, as abstract, as non-narrative. And yet, real or abstract, and this line always blurs, both form and style are constitutive of histories.

There is something so very exciting to imagine, to have come over oneself the beginnings of the sense of something, to allow the senses to see an image, not a precise image, but the thought of an image or material form, that's not so very clear. Yes, that's exciting, but then to get it out of the mind and into the world, ah, that's a real labor.

I have wanted to make some larger works, a kind of history painting, based on photography, not images or representations in photography but from the texture of photographs.

I wanted simply to sample the texture of older photographs, abstractly. In that abstraction would be a kind of history, far away, unfathomable, a mystery, a trace.

But then over the summer, I thought of history as actual events, relations of power, real blood and guts, refracted, narrated and accounted by and in image and words.

I returned to Manet's *Execution of Maximilian*, a painting which I have looked at again and again. From a certain accounting, I had thought of how Manet's painting, of which there are different versions, was also photographed.

It returned me to several ideas; photography/painting, colonialism, the Belgian Congo, the event, the seeing of the event, the disappearance of the event. The material image, the seeing of the image...

3

I, like many others, was taught the book, John Berger's *Ways of Seeing* in the context of Marxist-feminist critique. And while ideology critique is an important way to see the world, it has a tendency to look over the head of the image altogether in order to see what's behind it. The image once again becomes a symptom of a societal disease that's *out there*. You don't really see the image; you see the system that produced the image.

(Daniel Coffeen, *Making Sense of Images*)

I ask myself, what would it be like to create a picture of one's education, one's national history, one's cultural memory, one's connoisseurship, one's global aspiration, as a work of art? What if I could see everything I've seen in my entire life in fast forward in 20 minutes? (Another history picture all together)

Why a work of art? Perhaps better said under the aegis of art. Why? Perhaps to free the work from having to communicate some said thing, and rather, to interrogate the construction of meaning itself.

To make a picture that is at the same time narrative and against narrative, or perhaps shows its complication. I found and still find this, let's call it representation, awkward and difficult. I feel myself hedging.

Why is this?

Perhaps my discomfort is that a picture of representation reveals too much of me. Or just plainly, reveals too much. But after all, isn't it simply a picture, an image. Yes and no, I have great ambivalence toward them, images.

This is precisely why modernity abandons the history painting. Leave history to photography. From impressionism, to cubism and on, perception becomes the project of the image. To see seeing.

So accustomed are we to the inanity of mass medias over determined images, so exhausted by them, in the project of art we want something else. The pure pleasure of color or the infra ordinary or banal or inane or the structure that reveals, or just that big sculpture of Play-Doh, yes, that's about all we can take. And thank goodness. Perhaps that's why we like surveillance cameras, it's just a machine seeing, seeing blindly, it does not insist on seeing in any particular way, it just sees. It gets out of its way. It has no history, just pure sight, disconnected to memory. It is without a history. Yes of course it has instrumentality and is anything but dumb. But its machineness is its aesthetic. That's the point.

And why this word, history? History, that leads to biography, place, and culture.

Consider for a moment the great sociologist, Stuart Hall, who established the field of Cultural Studies, often using his own experience as a Jamaican-raised part Scottish, part African, part Portuguese Jew to make his point, Hall's central argument is that a person's identity is continually shaped by surrounding forces. All knowledge is embodied, spatially and culturally situated.

And so are images. Or are they? Thinking about this gives me reserve. It is in a sense a kind of prohibition. It makes me terribly self-conscious. Does it matter that I am also a Spanish Jew, a French Catholic Canadian, an American, and today a New Yorker? Who am I in the narrative? Who speaks? Who has power? What is power? What does that have to do with images? It has to do, I suppose, with whose seeing. The me, in the seeing.

I find these questions very difficult, even to the point of feeling abject. Yet this abjection urged me to make works in this genre of history, at least as I understand or wanted to take it on. Of course history is not always just, not at all.

I felt like the character and I imagine the filmmaker of *Birdman*, whose work wants to critique Hollywood and celebrity but knows how absolutely useless it is. The film calls its critique a virtue, a virtue of ignorance. Ignorance as in, what can I possibly say, you know how it is, like the Leonard Cohen song “Everybody Knows”:

Everybody knows the fight was fixed
The poor stay poor, the rich get rich
That’s how it goes
Everybody knows
Everybody knows that the boat is leaking
Everybody knows that the captain lied
Everybody got this broken feeling
Like their father or their dog just died

To say what everybody knows, seeing is not neutral, an act we assume to be mechanical and neutral—the eyes just see—is in fact run through with ideology. Everybody knows this.

5

The image is more than just ideas, more than just biography: it is an entire onto-cosmology, the very manner in which things are and come into the world.

(Daniel Coffeen, *Making Sense of Images*)

Even with access to all images from all over the world, our ability, mine really, to create an image larger than myself is quite impossible. Perhaps the texture of music is much more fluid, more malleable, and moves more easily in and out of various sounds once rooted in specific places. Perhaps sounds can be lifted from their original context (if such a thing exists) and still carry meaning, or at the very least a kind of texture that both carries forth a trace of its origin and erases it. But images, of figures and events past, of specific places and representations, even with strong cultural memory, outside their cultures and time, become lost to us, or for most of us, were never known.

Where images once were the preserve of national archives, ubiquitous digital transmission today is global and each of us has become our own archivist. As to what is and is not in the archives, and there are a host of them, from a wide variety of transnational corporate search engines and social

network services, that is something to discuss elsewhere.

As an artist whose subject is the varied apparatus of imaging, I wanted to look not this time only at the archeology of images, that is as technical artifacts, but those that specifically were called history paintings.

As to history paintings, the very subject of history has become, in the best sense problematized—indicting from some point of view real world evils and misdeeds – they are both contested collective histories and evaporating memories. And soon everything in the image seems a strange elsewhere. The only thing we can know is that yellow or green or blue or pink, that black and white. An arrangement of pixels, that's the whole of it. Or is it?

Is there something to be seen in images besides the image made? The event not recorded in the image. The event of its imaging. One strategy in post internet art is to give images, any image really, an objecthood, a thingness, such that image is simply another material, a physical thing of color, form or shape. It sort of doesn't really matter what the image is.

6

I wanted to make a go at seeing if images could still represent something to us. Of course this brings forward a whole set of problematic issues, because all images are culturally seen. (We'll get to that soon enough.)

Suffice it to say that in this new work I would no longer put the apparatus before what was seen but I would try and sense what was being seen or depicted as well as how it was seen. Not that the two can be separated. With this access to the world's images, I wanted to see them, to sense their thoughts, to look at them with other images. I wanted to engage them in conversation, in the conversation of images. And this as I said might be another part of post internet art. And I suppose this is what any remixed does.

7

Manet's modernity lies above all in his eagerness to update older genres of painting by injecting new content or by altering the conventional elements. He did so with an acute sensitivity to historical tradition and contemporary reality. This was also undoubtedly the root cause of many of the scandals he provoked.

History Pictures: Pictures in Conversation

One of the problems I confronted in my *Pictures* series, something I did not quite understand until making them, was that in taking a pre-existing picture and reworking it, a picture inside the canon of art, in its overexposure, said picture had lost its force, its disruption. Appropriation or remixing takes a certain deftness to work, to take the charge of the old and to make it be seen anew. In some sense it's an insiders' game, a game of connoisseurship. A game with rewards. Banksy is one of the best at this game as are Christian Marclay, Kathy Acker, Cindy Sherman and many others. I don't think it's my game and it's a game that is a bit old but there are many ways to play it, and something's always new to be found, especially along the lines of Yinka Shonibare who, for example, recast himself as narrator of *The Rake's Progress*.

This leads to the strategy of re-reading the text, narrating it from a once-minor character who is now MC of affairs. The whole of the postcolonial is taken up by this, those that the colonizer cast aside and denigrated now come back to speak. And alas, like Rashomon or Citizen Kane, the very person or event we thought we know is something entirely else. Not just else, but multiple.

With these works I wanted to re-imagine, reinvent time, to see it as a physical dimension, to create an object of the image, that doesn't obliterate it, but teases out its trajectories and brings it back from its overexposure in its continual transmission. Of course, the image will never exhaust itself in its repetition but become so domesticated that all its initial charge is gone. How, then, to see these familiar pictures but to rework them and make them new again with other pictures?

With the use of perspective and lenses long before photography, Western picture making, not unlike genres of movies were pretty stable. There were the genres of History, Landscape, Portraiture and Still Life. Picture and picture making were regulated by the church then academies and the discourse around them narrow. It was this controlled discourse, this decorum of the picture and its reception that artists worked against that created occasional shocks and outrage.

My first interest was in History paintings but over time it became the history of painting and with that the history of photography, and I suppose a history of image. Pictures have often, if not always, been about and in conversation with other pictures. This led me to think of pictures in their many modes and many genres across time and to want to create conversations amongst and between them. I began to imagine new images, to see new things, new thoughts often times by simply placing one image on another, or layering images and cutting them out. These new pictures pointed to things sometimes difficult to discern but there was always a something.



MARC LAFIA
*Icon (from the series
 'Pictures in
 Conversations')*, 2015

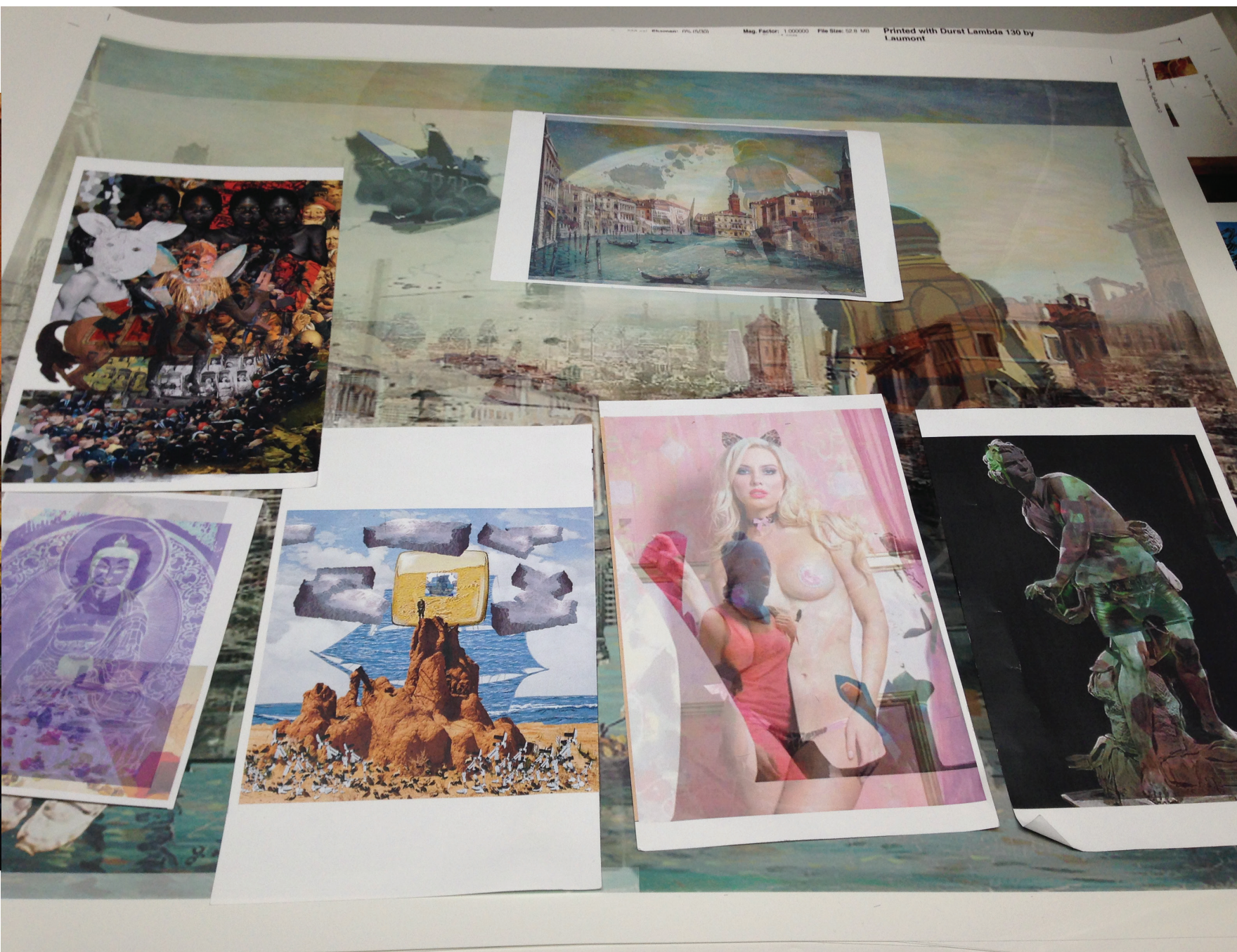
C-print
 25 x 21 in (63.5 x 53.34 cm)
 1 of 2 AP
 Courtesy of the artist
 signed/numbered on bottom
 Estimate \$2,200

This auction will open at
 12:00pm EST on May 08, 2015.

Watch Work Follow Artist

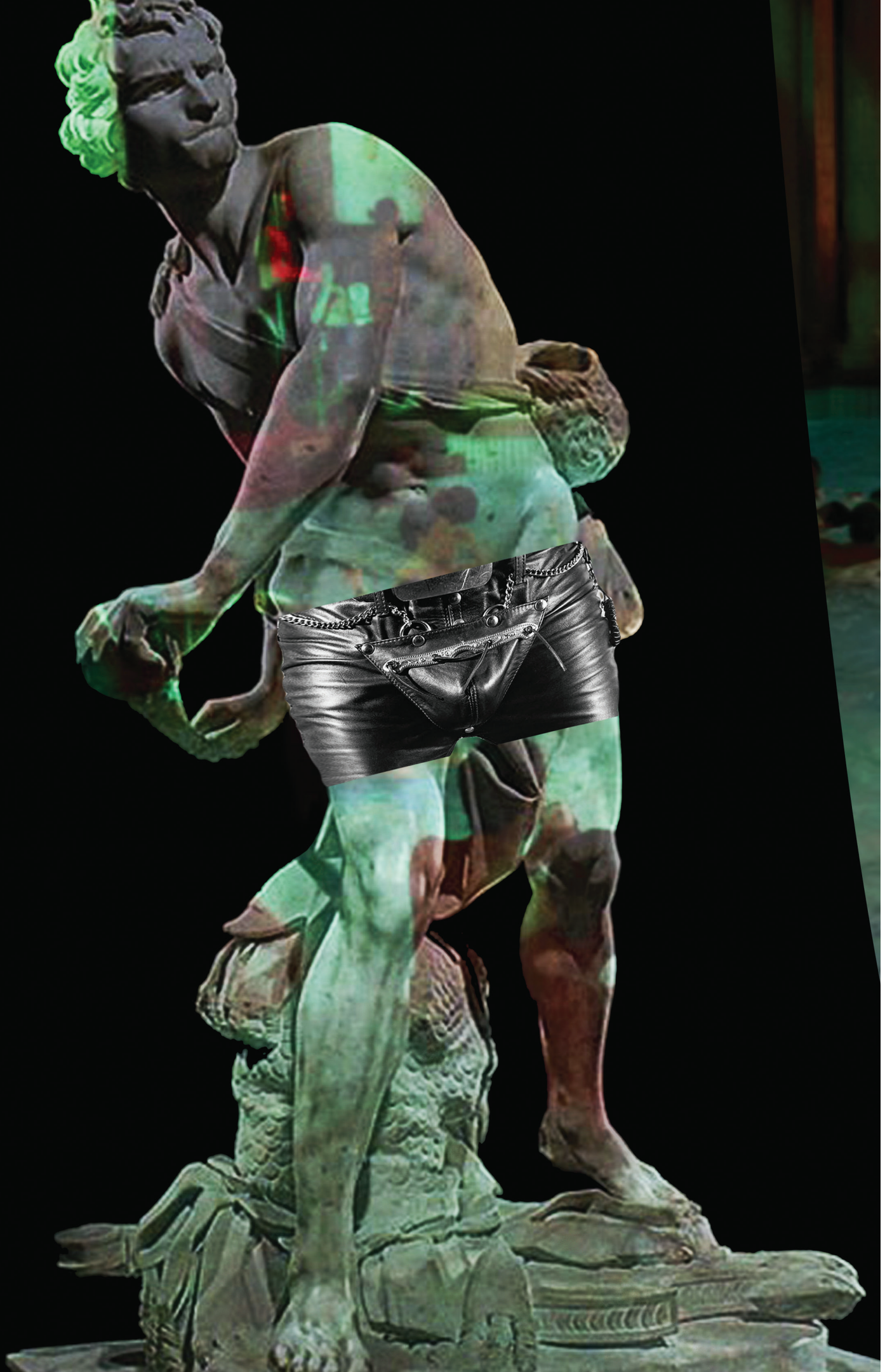








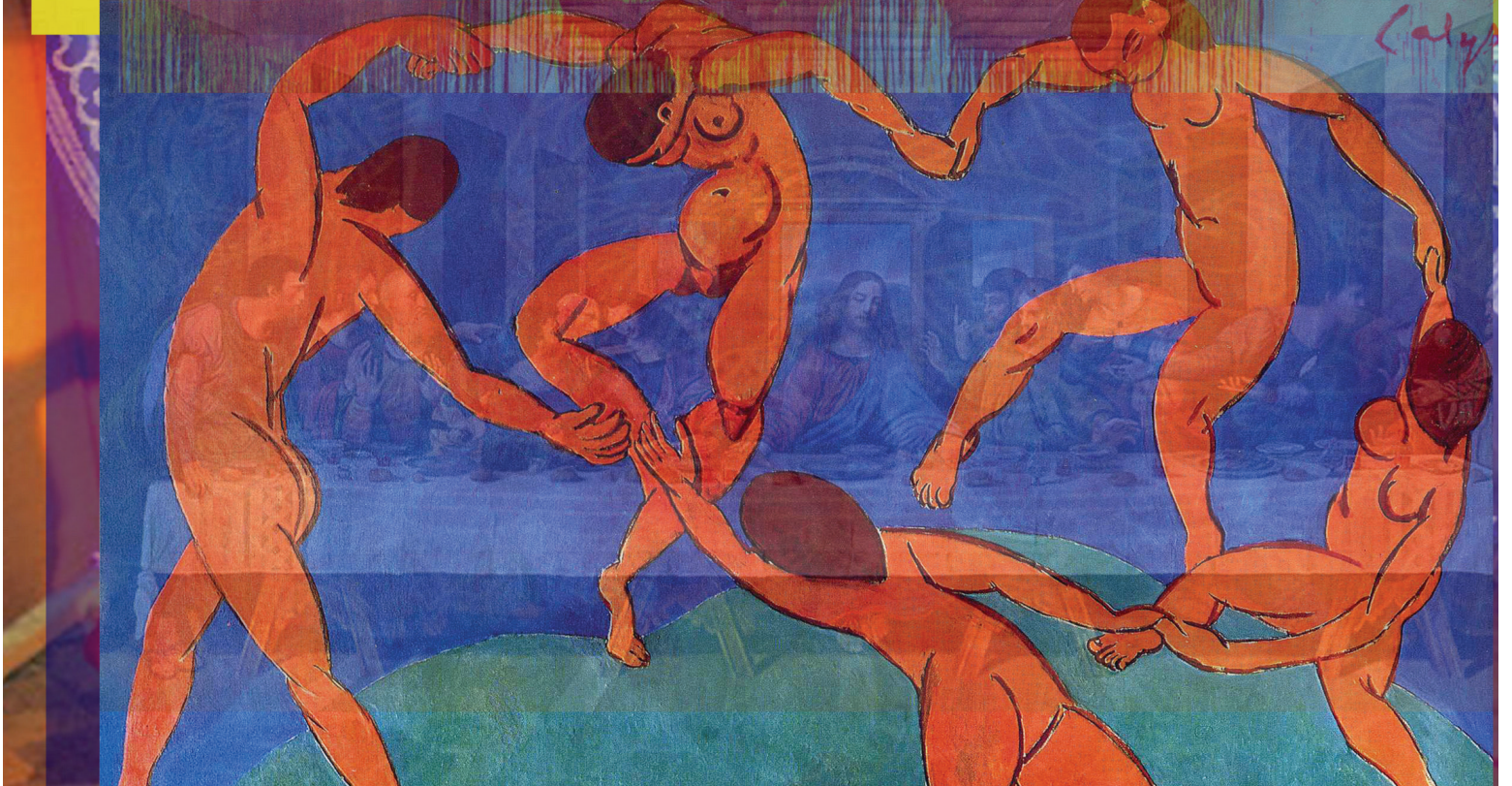
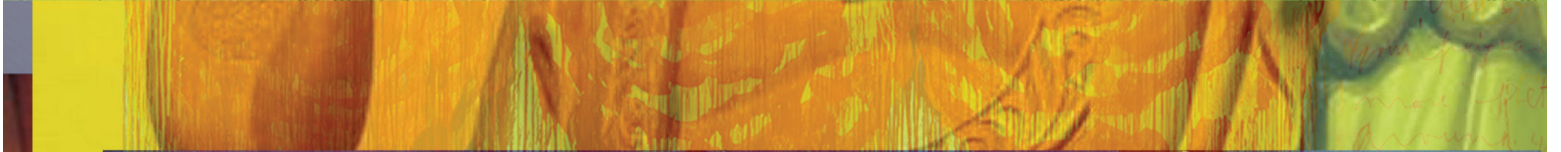








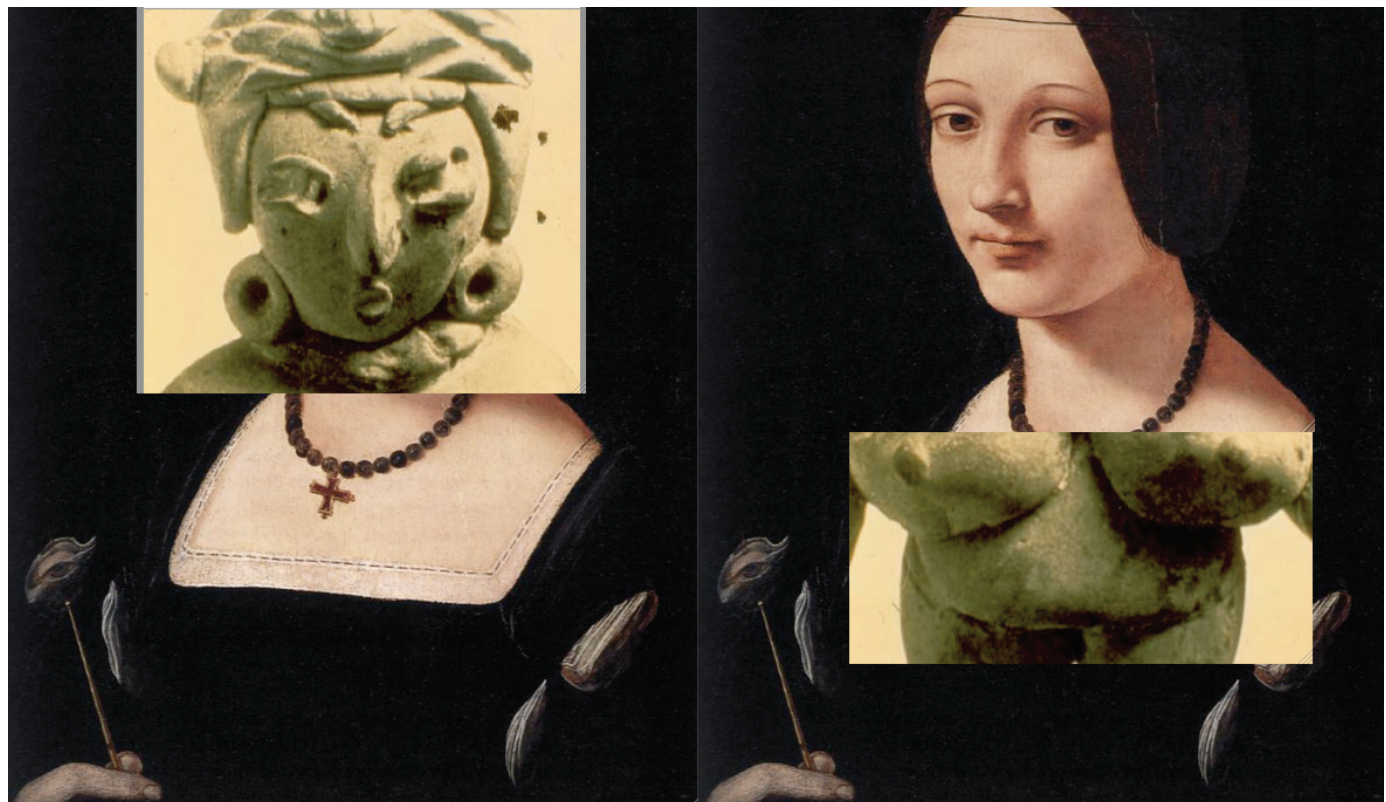






Eros through the ages (west end boys and eastern girls)

Beauty for much of human history has been connected to fertility. No matter how we consider female beauty – and in that put away the idea of conception – female beauty has always turned on fertility. But in fact not at all always. Soon enough in man's history, sex became not about procreation, but pleasure, and pleasure for pleasure's sake. Well, that depended on what your philosophy of life was. For the ancients, the cultivation of pleasure and appetite suffused life and its fulfillment was simply a natural appetite to be appeased or cultivated. With the Christian era, focus was on the afterlife, this life was but a short one compared to eternal life and the body was a corruption, strange and alien to the aspiring spirit. Nevertheless, artists and their patrons in the staging of religious or mythic scenarios wanted to visually enjoy such pleasures. (One need only look at the French Rococo painters Boucher and Poussin to see this.) But just turn the globe around, and on the other side of the world, the earthly pleasures of sex during the same time, the 16th to 18th century, are depicted in Japan during the Edo period in Shunga prints using the wood cut or Ukiyo-e technique. Sets of such depictions were enjoyed by all social groups and were often given as wedding gifts and such art integrated into the fabric of everyday life. But things of the body were not all shunned in the Western world and found their way into pictures through scenes of mythologies, even religious pictures and then pictures made for the aristo. Wanting to see both East and West simultaneously I made the following works both as an accordion book based on the Japanese screen and as prints on rice paper mounted and superimposed on each other on wood.















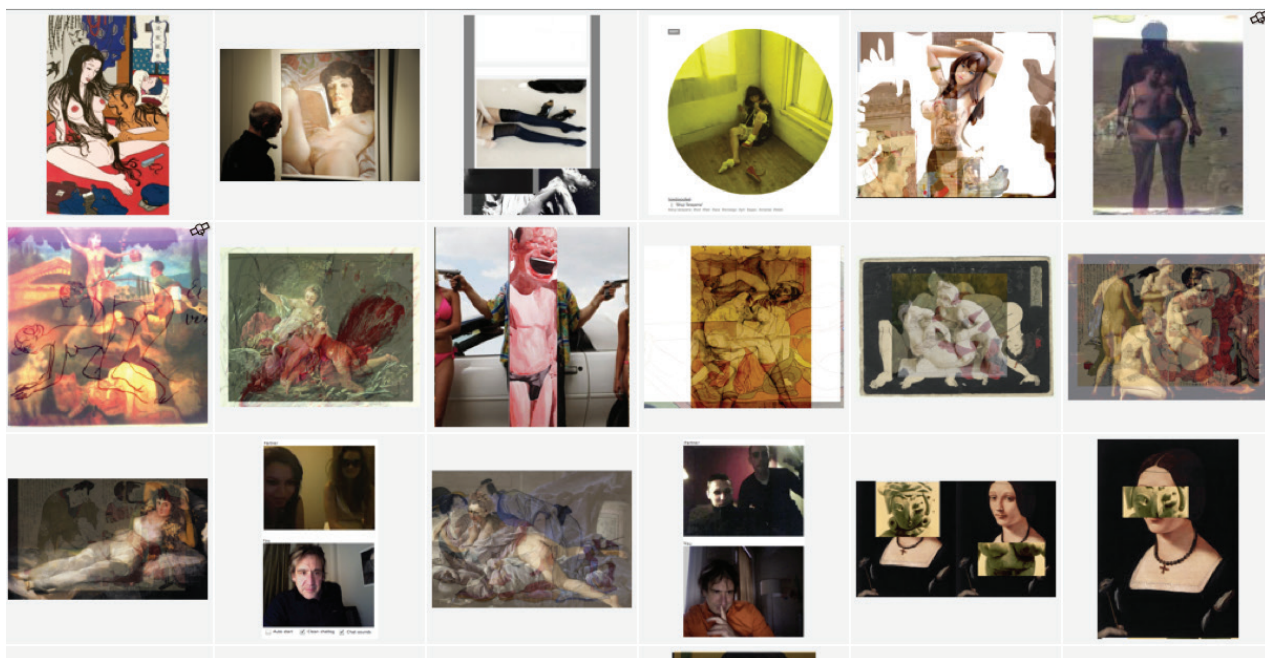
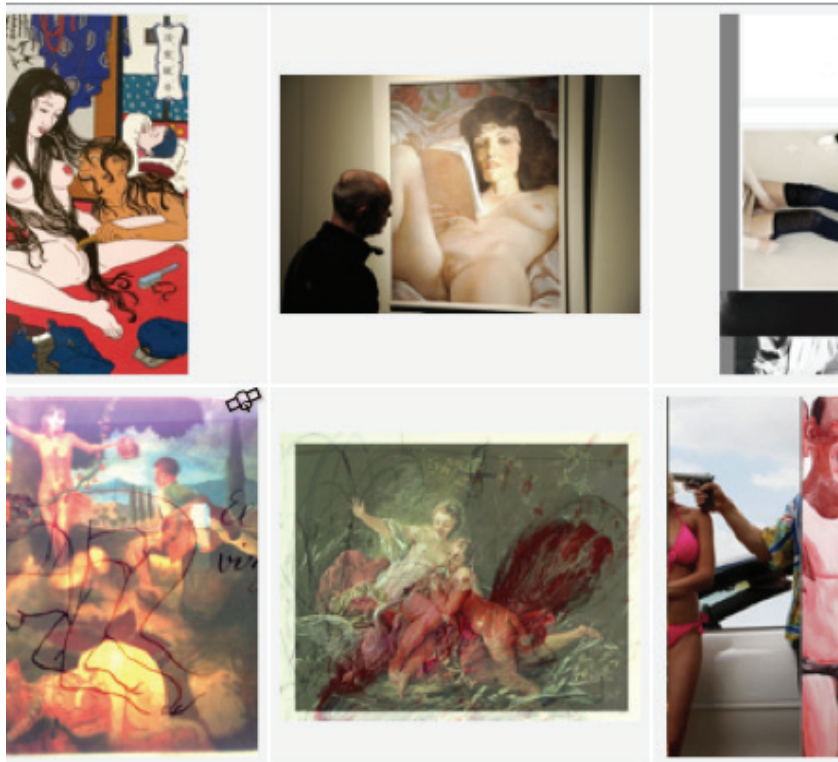


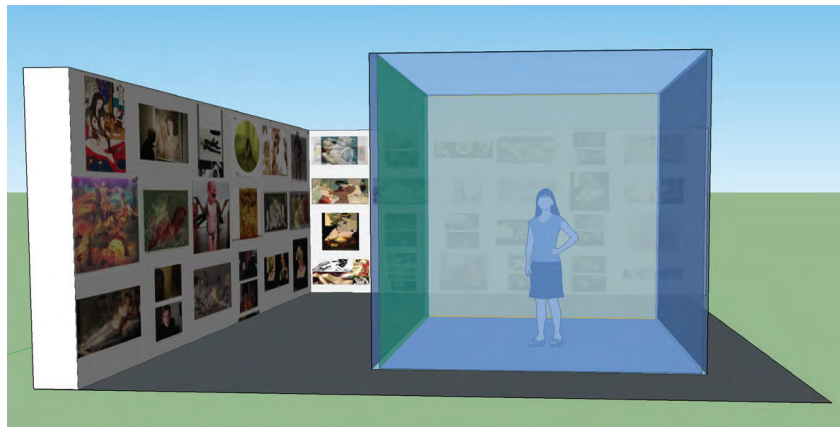
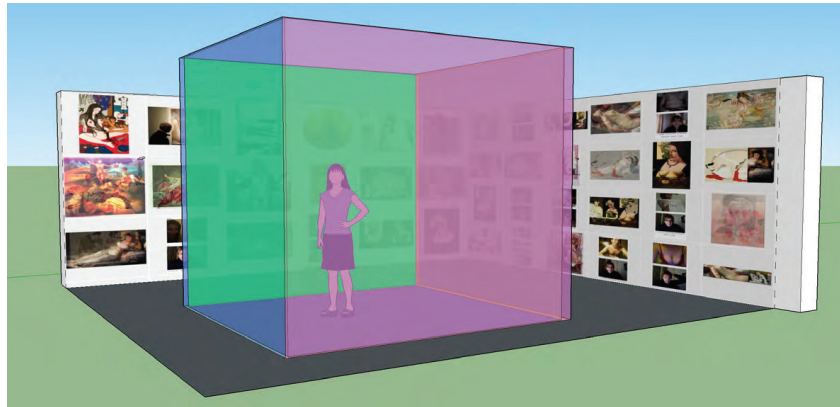
Eros Spring Break

Set into the middle of the room is an architectural sized fabric veil that acts as a visual filter. This wall-sized filter lies somewhere between an iPhone camera app effect and a rave. The filter allows the work to continually become one's own personal picture depending on where the viewer positions himself. It is a way to individualize the works from a distinct but finite set of vantage points. Furthermore it evokes a sense of sensuality, a late-night club, mysterious, timeless rapture, a non-linear series of encounters, between artworks of eros through the ages, the artist on line, all moments in time reminding us of the continual transactions that we enact on a daily and historical basis. Through collage, re-photography, online performance, and exhibitionism this work enacts how we each encounter the other in sex, love, and ritual—human behavior as current today as it is age-old.

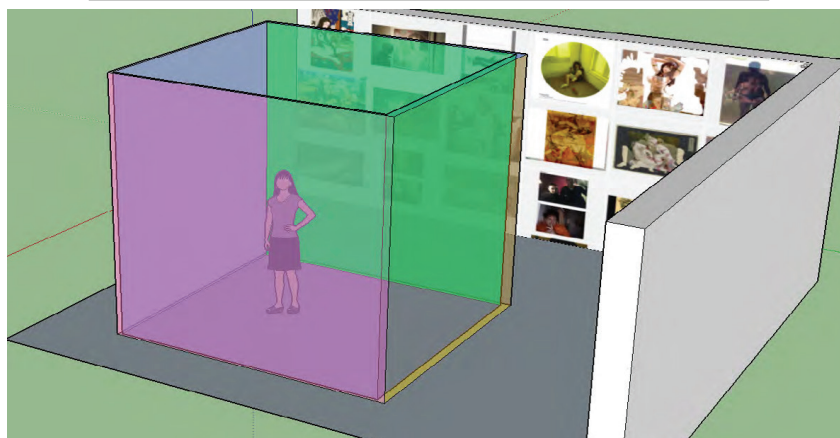
The artist asks us to see the call and response, the back and forth, the circuit of seeing ourselves in today's online world as a form of seduction. Images that have been culled from personal archives as well as the public domain of the Internet reflects a global infatuation with sensuality.







Installation rendering



24

**Information
Palimpsest**

To have a gallery exhibition today requires shipping, fabrication, insurance, installation—all of it requiring meticulous planning and precise pre-visualization of the placement of where things will be arranged in the gallery space. Artworks are made, carefully packed and travel globally to arrive to the next white cube. All of it requires the review of committees, previews to investors, and all with an eye to what might sell.

Much of the work I had done up to this point was video and prints works but wanted now to produce objects. Prints are no more than a file than can be produced and framed locally. I had the good fortune of my dealer, a good friend I had met at an artist residency after the financial collapse of *artandculture*, an artist himself who became a gallerist and dealer. There is a lot of money in dealing, or there can be, and artist in global circulation requires a good deal of capital.

Now the artist has to take some territory, has to have a signature, has to become “famous” doing *x* and therefore do more of *x*.

I wanted at this point to extend my product line, yes, that’s right, my “product line,” as the artist is not unlike a fashion brand, required to make new work every season, and so my interest in the social circulation of the image and its instrumentality now was to be spliced into a larger query, the creation and circulation of beauty and war in a global circuit of trade, including luxury goods, Igbo statuary, arms, ammunition, search algorithms, genes, hashtags, fractals, fertility goddesses, eggs and identity.

Each room in the gallery would be a kind of platform to make visible in an elegant, often whimsical way, a network of relations and objects that commingle vastly different materials including wood and plaster, hand drawings and digital collages, eggs and rocket launchers, one ton shipping bags and online identities.

If we think of the earth, bodies and societies as writing material on which the original writing has been effaced we can nevertheless see and imagine the traces that remain.

With the *Information Palimpsest* the artist, like the cook, me, would note how materials in their imbrication undergo a process of domestication, how the tactile becomes informational, yet the traces of past material histories now immaterial histories remain.

How, then, can we talk to what remains and what is present? This is the question each of the rooms wants to ask.

Complex systems, whether biological or non-organic, are increasingly becoming part of a flattened ontological continuum. Everything now talks to everything, and with machines talking to machines and the human encounter with the non-human all things become massively addressable and possibly massively conversational. In our age of the anthropocene we must learn these new modes of dialogue and commence conversation.

What the artist suggests is that we must do this materially. That our notion of the informational is yet another layering both map and archeology, both tool and object, a palimpsest that is us.

So the works you see below, would need a “buy in” to be produced, require capital and have buyers on the other end. Much more capital and logistic energy and support than simply printing a Photoshop file.

You can imagine a lot of back and forth on this—who pays, who will buy, and so the artist now can’t simply make work but must have it so to speak “pre-approved,” supported, and support eventually means a way to pay for itself and some.

To visualize the exhibition, a model is made of the exhibition space, either a maquette or in Sketch Up, a 3D program with exact measurements of the physical space in which the work will be exhibited.

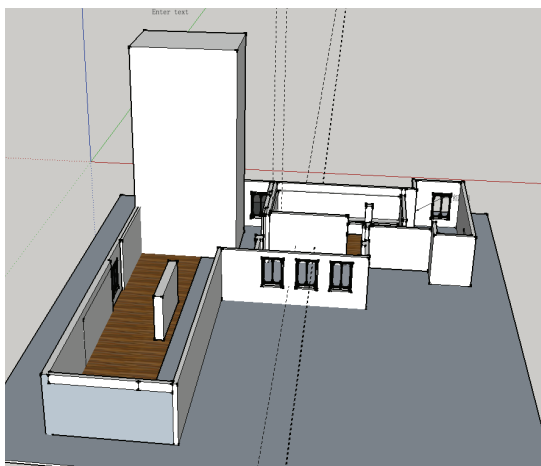
In some sense one can see the ease of the photography file or even the painting, which only needs to be rolled up and sketched and framed at its destination site. That was, after all the brilliance of painting, a mobile commodity not fixed to a specific place. A piece of fabric, easily transportable, stable and durable.

The installation work, a strange hybrid between media changed that.

But let’s cast back for a moment to the work of art, before it was a work of art, but a ritual, specific to a place, to a season, to its participants. An event that was bodily, aligned not just with sight but tactile and physical and auditory. This kind of work, called at times, a total work of art, had been an aspiration for artists and community to have a total experience. What was called a happening, something physical, spiritual, total. Well, in a atomized world, our senses are compartmentalized, our pleasures regimented and regulated, and so art becomes an object to be posed.

Each room in the gallery is to be a platform to make visible in an elegant, often whimsical way, a network of relations and objects that commingle vastly different materials including wood and plaster, hand drawings and digital collages, eggs and rocket launchers, one ton shipping bags and online identities.

*one ton transport-and-carry bags, an international standard,
rocket launchers, trade in munitions, giant blue water storage
containers and Tuk Tuk drivers.*



Totems

In this new series of work, totems (*#palimpsest*), Marc Lafia playfully brings together objects of luxury, Igbo spirit statuary and virtual eye candy collections. With these he has created a series of witty and luscious sculptures, contemporary totems about global circuits of cultural exchange, international commerce, the sacred and spiritual of the totem and the object of art.

Expanding his work on the circulation of the image, Lafia uses images and objects circulated, shipped and collected on social networks and brings them into a spirit realm. To bring touch to vision he's pastiched Louis Vuitton, Chanel and Gucci bags with images of Igbo statuary and Pinterest image collections creating aluminum sculptures of a new kind of totem, one that serves as an emblem and revered symbol of luxury as the power to possess and collect the world.

If we think of the earth, bodies and societies as writing material on which the original writing has been effaced we can nevertheless see and imagine the traces that remain. Here the artist, like the cook, notes how materials in their imbrication undergo a process of domestication, how the tactile becomes informational, yet the traces of past material histories now immaterial histories remain.

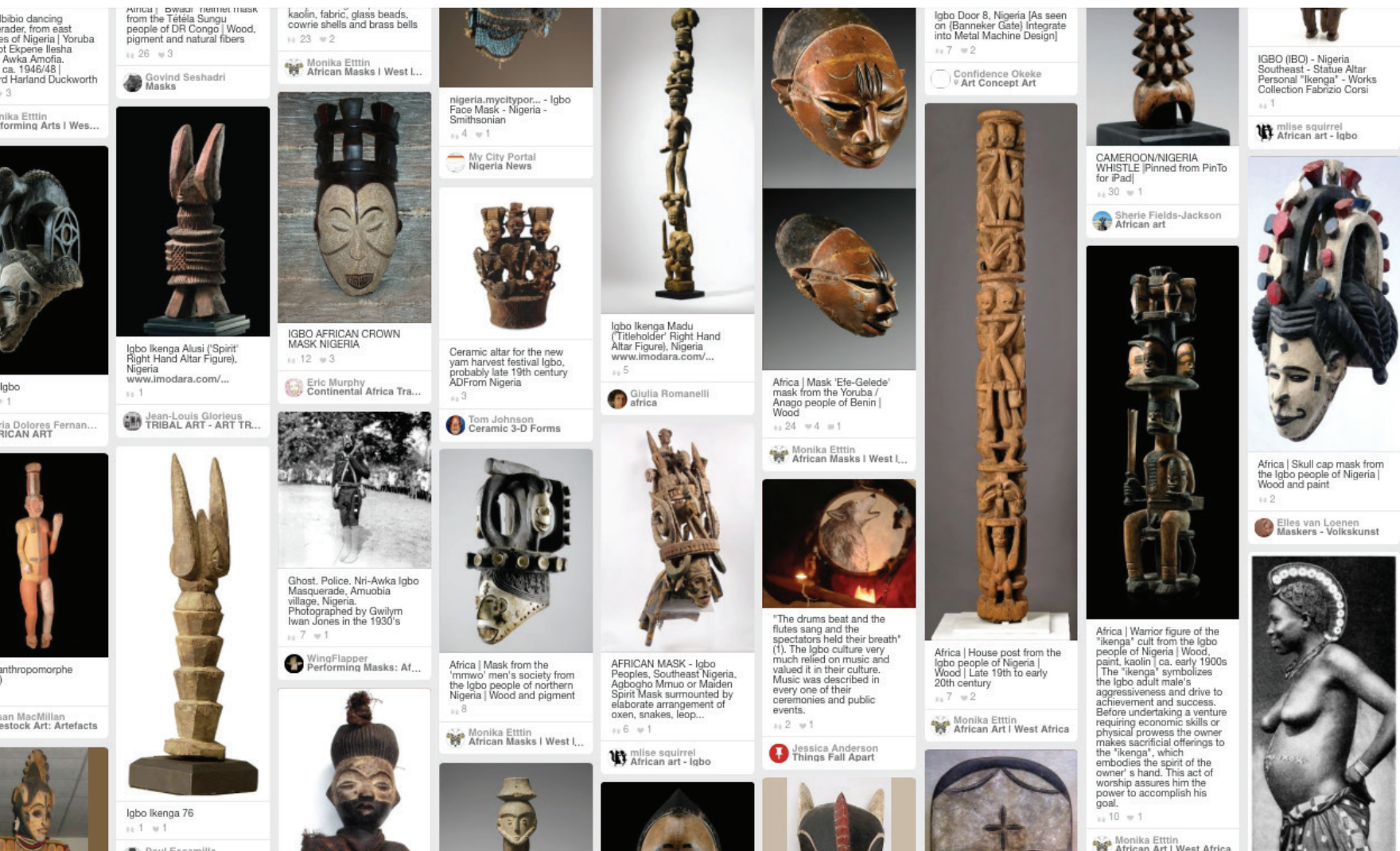
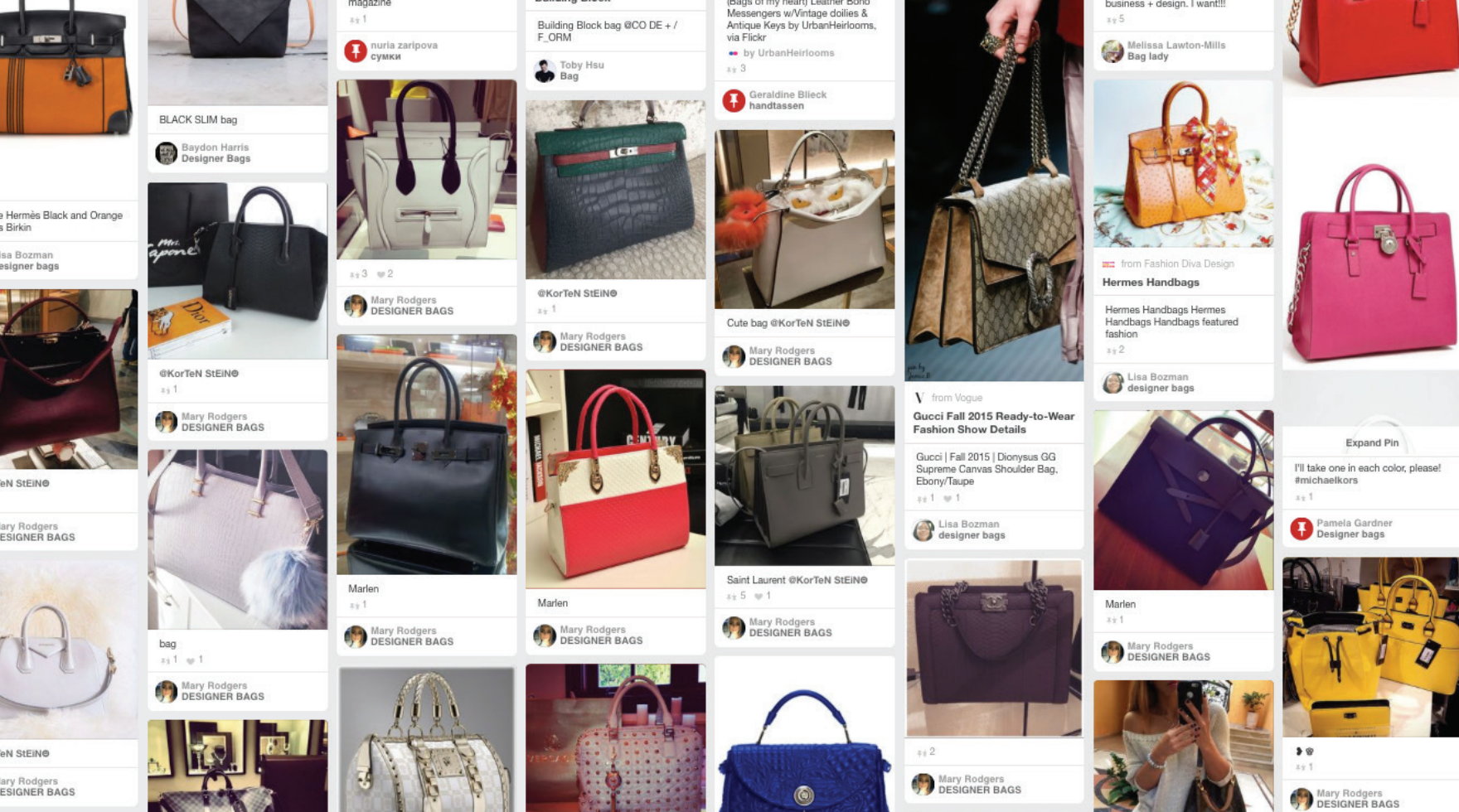
Here Lafia suggests we must do this materially. That our notion of the informational is yet another layering both map and archeology, both tool and object, a palimpsest making a new totem that is us.

(<http://cargocollective.com/marclafia/palimpsest-totems>)



Fendi 2016 13" x 90" dye baked print on aluminum
Igbo Louis V 2016 13" x 90" dye baked print on aluminum

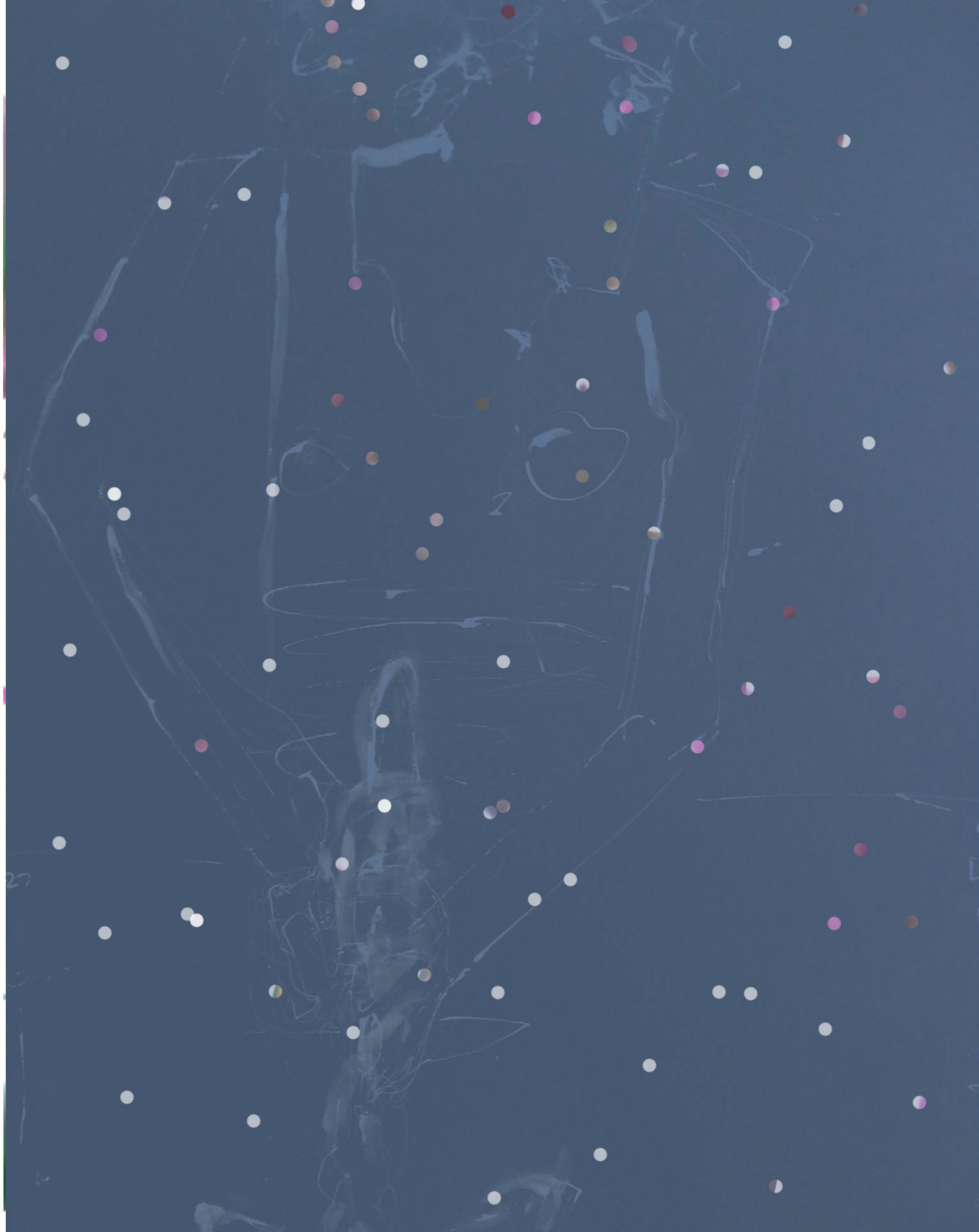












Australian modern artist Emma Gale mixes textures of crayons, pencils, feathers and fabric trim to create vibrant, rich, colourful and mesmerising collages. 8Art

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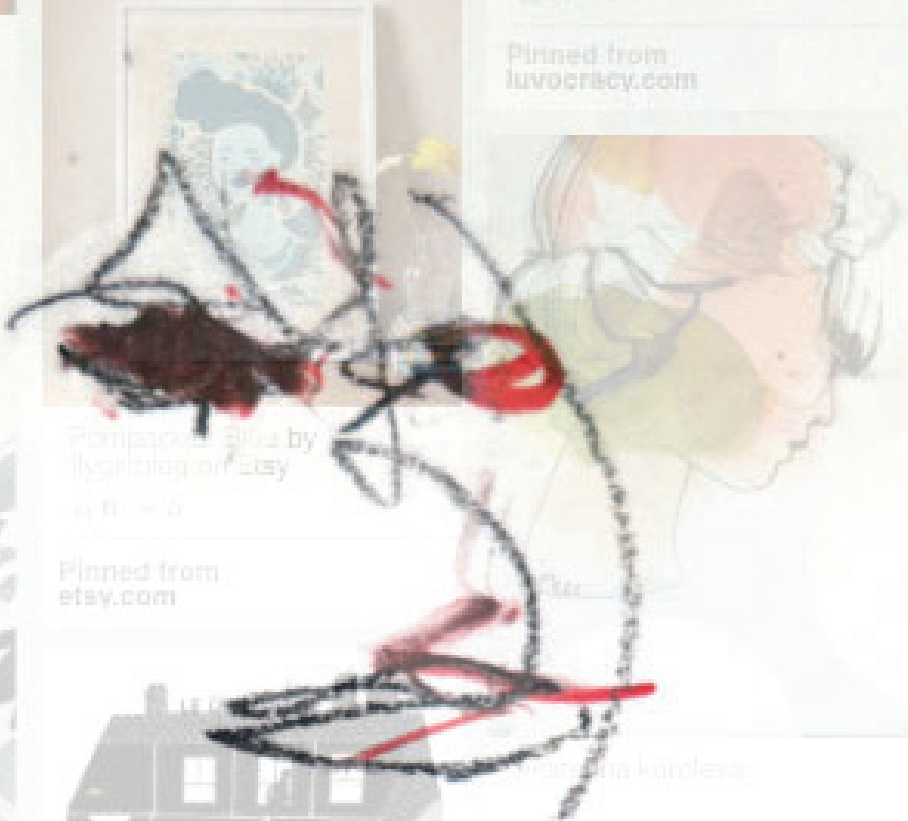


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mirellabruno.tumblr.com

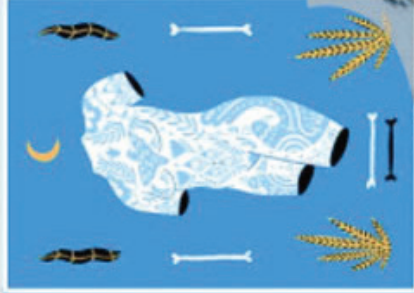


Illustration by Ruby Taylor

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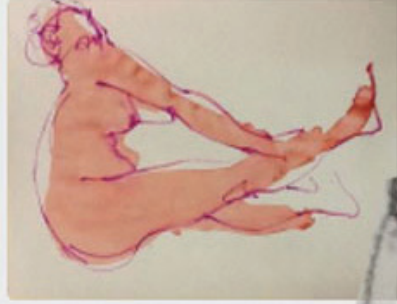
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Richard Thomas

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Tea Lover Gift - It's Always
Tea Time - Tea Party Decor
Kloppen Art...

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Tea Lover Gift - It's Always
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Marion Barraud - Party

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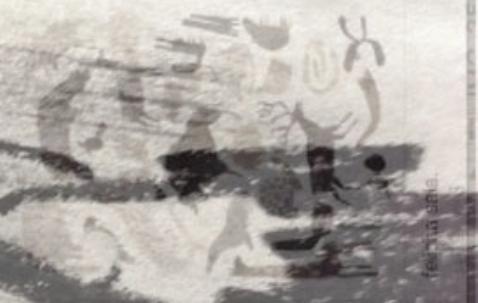
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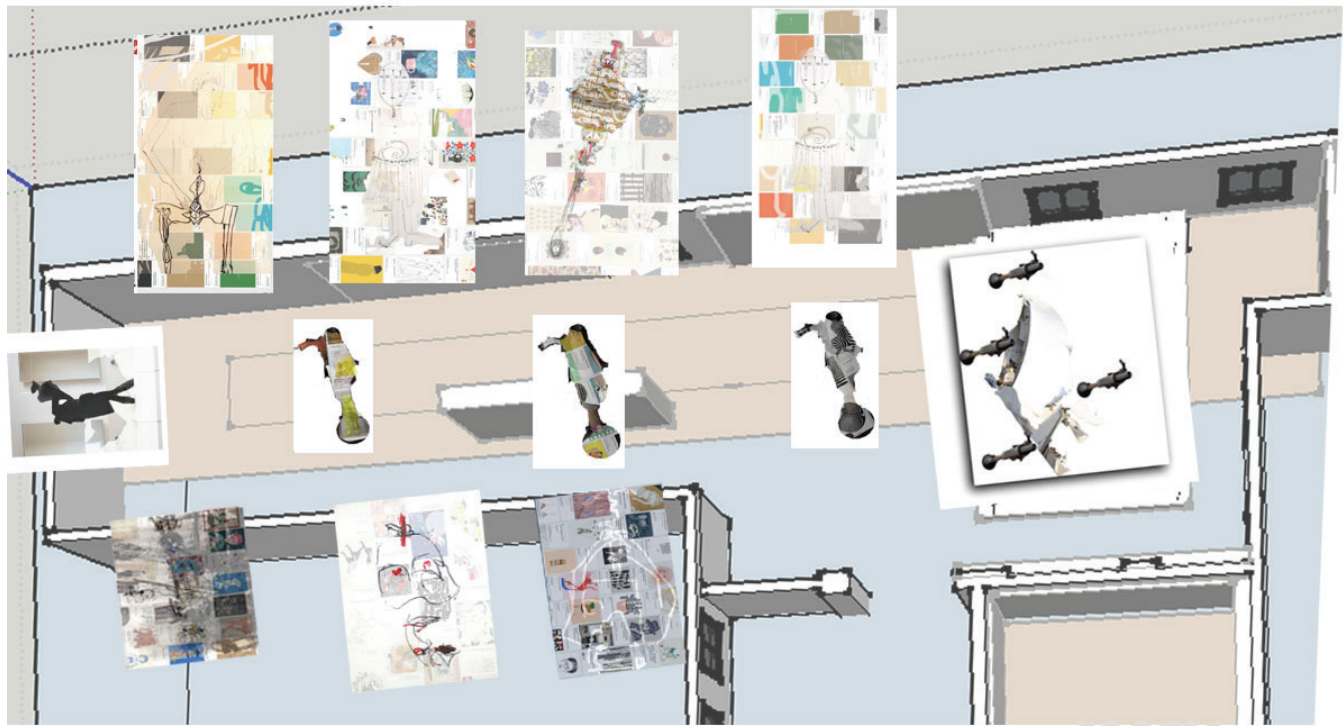


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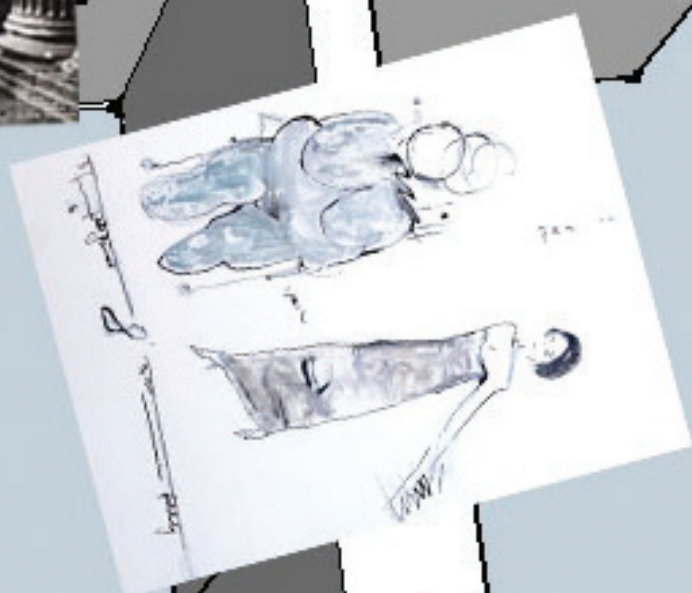












25

Marking
the
Contemporary

In the last three years, I've spent a good deal of time drawing and painting.





Though I had been making drawings for a number of years, I was in my art work, work I was exhibiting, collaging, arranging, performing, curating, leaving the drawings aside while using design and code, photography, film, video and found objects for my online, computational films, installation, print and video.

Many of these works started with the idea of art as event, what I called the event of art, as that moment that the artwork comes to consciousness, the act is configured and apprehended as that which is art, art as a way, a way to engage and see the world, make the world.

These simple early works were actions, sometimes private, sometimes public. For example, stepping quickly under a large bouncing balloon, myself and the balloon becoming one, or standing in an art fair with a sign as a sculpture, going into rooms and setting up a camera and letting others interact with it, rearranging objects in department stores, in apartments, seeing this next to that, interacting with the passersby, others in online chats, each was an event of art, when thought of and constituted as such.



These interventions, inventions, conspirings, breakings of the fourth wall and everyday reality and habit, often whimsical and momentary, alone and communal, were the carrying forth of a belief in the power of art to make and remake the world. It was a way to inhabit the world. To retake life. It was the practice of art as the practice of life. Life could be art. Life was art. We had only to enact it as such.



These works, these actions started from the place of embodiment, my body, my breadth, how it moves, why it moves, noting what moves it. How does my body move about, physically and psychically, in what spaces, through what protocols, through what customs? What has marked my body, my person, so that it goes in the world this way and not that? I am a body in space. I am a body all-too known to myself wanting to unknow myself. I am a body not knowing myself well enough wanting to know myself knowing. I am a social body, a body formed by the social. My body has the habits of its social contouring, my body which is all of me, my mind, feelings and heart, my body, me, has its limits. I have been made by others. I have made myself. I make myself. I make my body. (Stars make my body. Time.) My body is made my others. My body is mine and not mine. I can't see the making of me. I want to see me made. I want to unmake me to be me. There is no me. What is this body, that is all bodies? What is this body that traces back to all things.

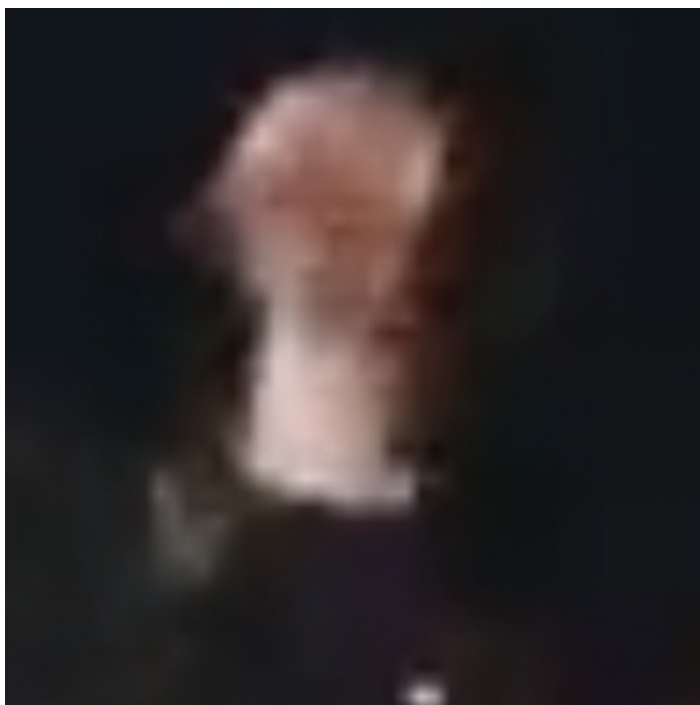
The event of art, the site of art, must be my body. Art itself is always a social body. A body of objects and knowledge, cultural and material. My body touched by art. Art touching my body.





The event of art, the site of art, must be the signs and systems from the bottom up to the top down that have made me. That have made everything. Everything is made and can be made again. I can make me. I can unmake the me that has been made. I can see me being made. I can see these letters forming on this page. I can see the words are in English. I know they are English. I speak English. I know that. These words are of a certain typeface, Times, normal. My fingers work about this keyboard as I type. This keyboard shapes my fingers. The letters and words are so clear and consistent in type. Each *e* is like every other *e*. Each letter that I type comes out perfectly like all the other Times, normal, lowercase *es*.

E. E. Cummings was the poet of the typewriter. All art is a poetry of materials, sense and being. I thought myself a poet of the digital camera. I don't make poetic pictures. Not at all. Well I do, but I am not after poetic pictures. Poetic pictures may be a register of picture taking for me. But like E. E. Cummings, I take pictures of the camera as he did of the typewriter.



I know how this typewriter works. You can see its type. It's a type of writing the typewriter. It's peculiar, the things it can do. Digital cameras are peculiar, too. I wrote about this in my book, *Image Photograph*. The camera is like my body. It's not simply an extension of my body. Rather, I extend myself through its body. Its body, like a simple organism, can do certain things. I am interested in the things it can do. It does peculiar things.



So, what is it about drawing and painting? What's peculiar about it? It's not newfangled like computation, social practice, participatory art, digital media, environmental art, the archive, performance and so on. It's much, much older than the popular return today of slide projectors, super-8 film, 16mm film, overhead projectors, microfilm and other recently obsolesced media.



Drawing and painting have been around forever. Certainly, drawing forever. Both, for the last fifty years, have been pronounced dead again and again. Dead in the sense that there is no more they can show us. So, how to approach drawing or a painting? No doubt, painting is as alive as ever and the most highly priced art object on the global market today. But what can I do with it?



When I see a photograph, I see the picture taken. Not the photograph, but the apparatus of the picture-taking. I see the form factor, I read the software, the filter, the situation in front of the camera. I see the camera seeing. Unless it's a picture taken like E. E. Cummings used his typewriter, I see it as a picture which has a tenuous connection to what it depicts.

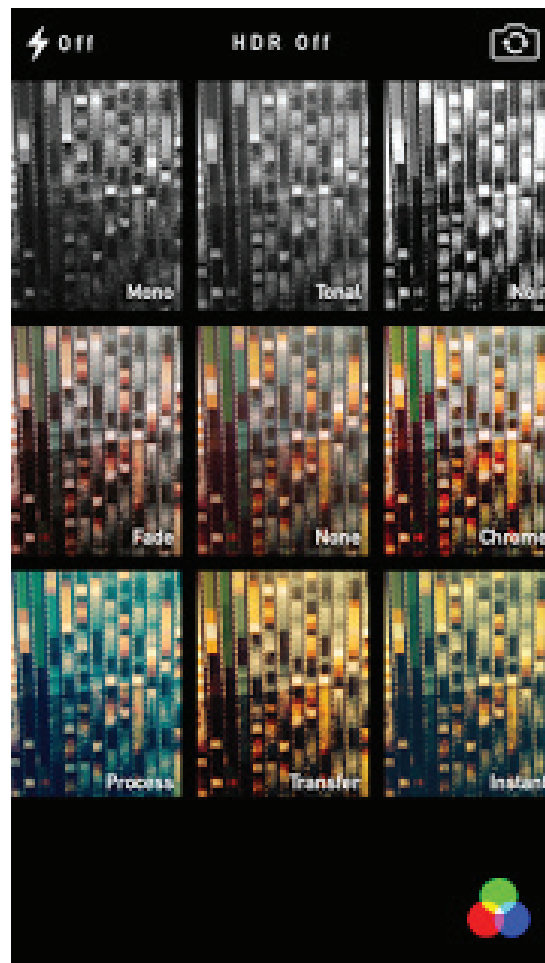


I may like its sense of picture taking, but I can't read it in its depictions and it startles me that others do. I don't want to see it as a depiction but as an event of picture taking. This is why I cannot accept a certain line of contemporary photography and its thinking as it turns on the idea of the camera as an instrument of depiction rather than an event of an instrument of recording the world. The camera does not record; it makes a world.



Unlike the typewriter and the camera, drawing turns inward. It does look out onto the world, yes, of course, but its instrument is different. Perhaps the pencil is more like the violin or a wind instrument; you play it in time. One note or chord followed by another and another, building up certain patterns.

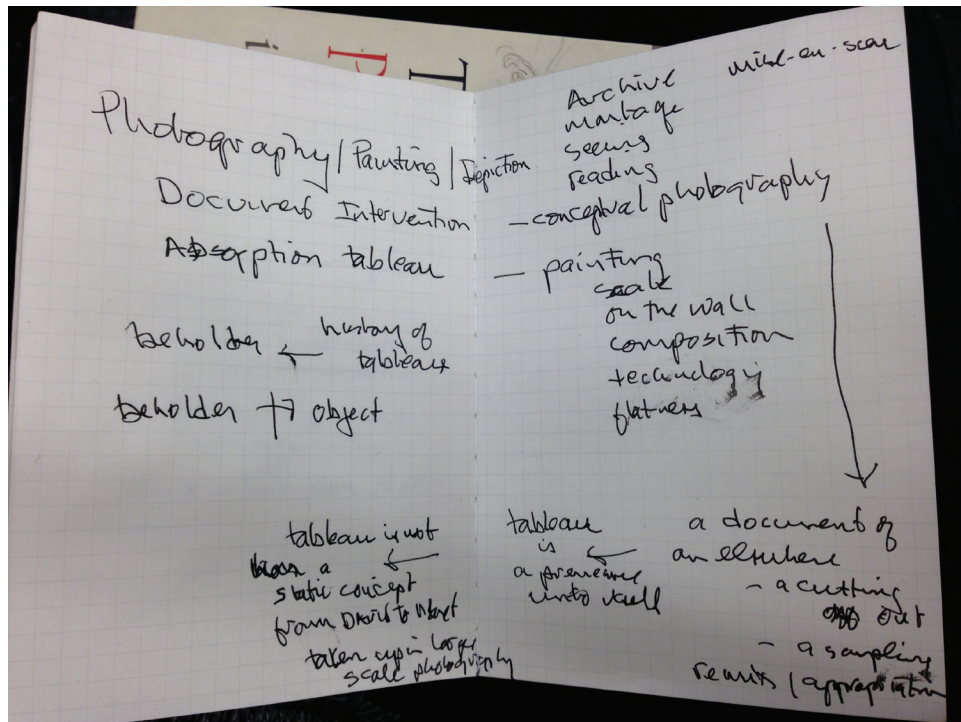
Drawing is a recording of time, the pressure of the hand, speed, line, paper, surface, attack. It is the recording of one's hand, one's body, one's nervous system. It's a signature of the body. Of a temperament. It's not all at once as in taking a picture, releasing the shutter and light exposing the sensor all over, instantly. When I draw, I am taken up in a very different way. I am distributed over time. I don't arrest an instant of seeing akin to sight, I am recording an optical seeing, a lens seeing. In drawing, I make things appear with my hand. It shows me things I could not see, it suggest things. It can follow itself.





Of course, an algorithm can make drawings. Only look at the program Processing. And, of course, the naturalist would notate, observe and record those things in the world they wanted to make record of, they wanted to record. They wanted to catalog the world, measure it, index it. We can clearly see that drawing and counting were once the same thing, until counting became its own kind of drawing.



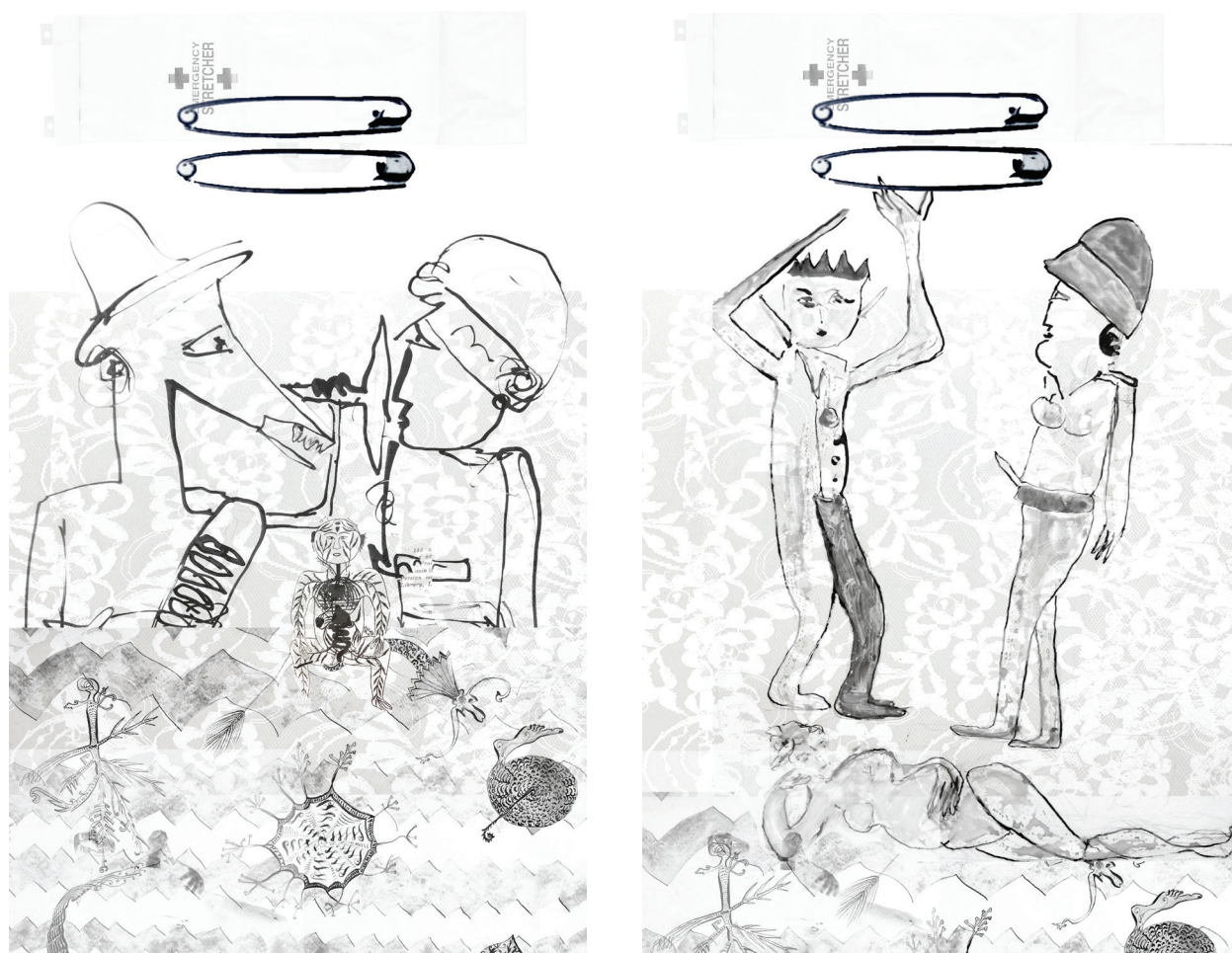


Now, I don't want to say the camera can't make a line, because it can. Nor that a line can't do the work of depiction. Depiction as in to make a picture, a picture we recognize. Is the camera inherently more naturalistic or empirical than a pencil? More neutral? I am not sure. If we were to compare courtroom sketches of witnesses with courtroom photographs of these same people, what would be the difference?



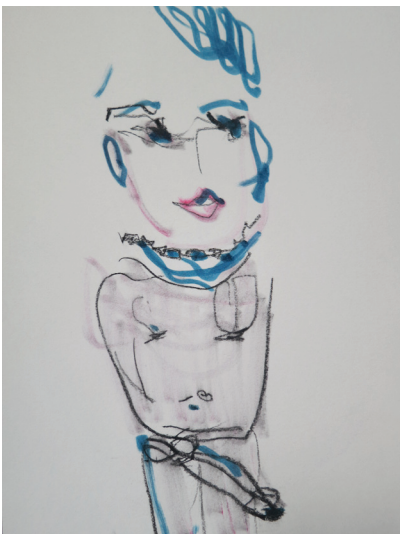
I am a body. My body is a line moving through space. My body is a mass moving. I am a painting. I am mass and volume. Francis Bacon does not paint faces, he paints heads. Lines and masses. Shapes and colors. His is not the event of “art” but of painting. He has confronted painting. He has found his way in painting.

The event of art concerns the complex of art. The institution of art-reception is its medium. Arts history, its objects, reception and discourse frame the frisson that gives forth the event. That this is art because I say it’s art. That I can say it’s art is the open and permissive framework of art. Opening a space of art is the event of art. *Art* with a capital A. How to open art. How to open up to art.



Collaging and arranging. The subject arranged, re-arranged. The subject of Art arranged and re-arranged. How, then, to stage the situation of drawing or painting? Not to draw, but to stage it. To see drawing. To draw to see inside me. To draw to see the temperament of me. To stage me in drawing. Not the biography of me. Not to illustrate me. To ask drawing what it might find in me.











Perhaps the event of art is the event of ourselves becoming present to the world, coming into being with it. The con/temporary might be that somewhere in the nowhere of utopia, that is without innocence. As much as we long and admire the creativity and innocence of children, art remains out of their reach (we don't want to believe this, I know), as it does not yet with children know itself as such. The event of art, then, must both be a knowing event while at the same time not happened yet. We know the event only as it happens.

Drawing, painting, photography, installation, films, it does not matter; each is a way of knowing, becoming. What matters is what we bring to them and what they reveal and how they converse with us.

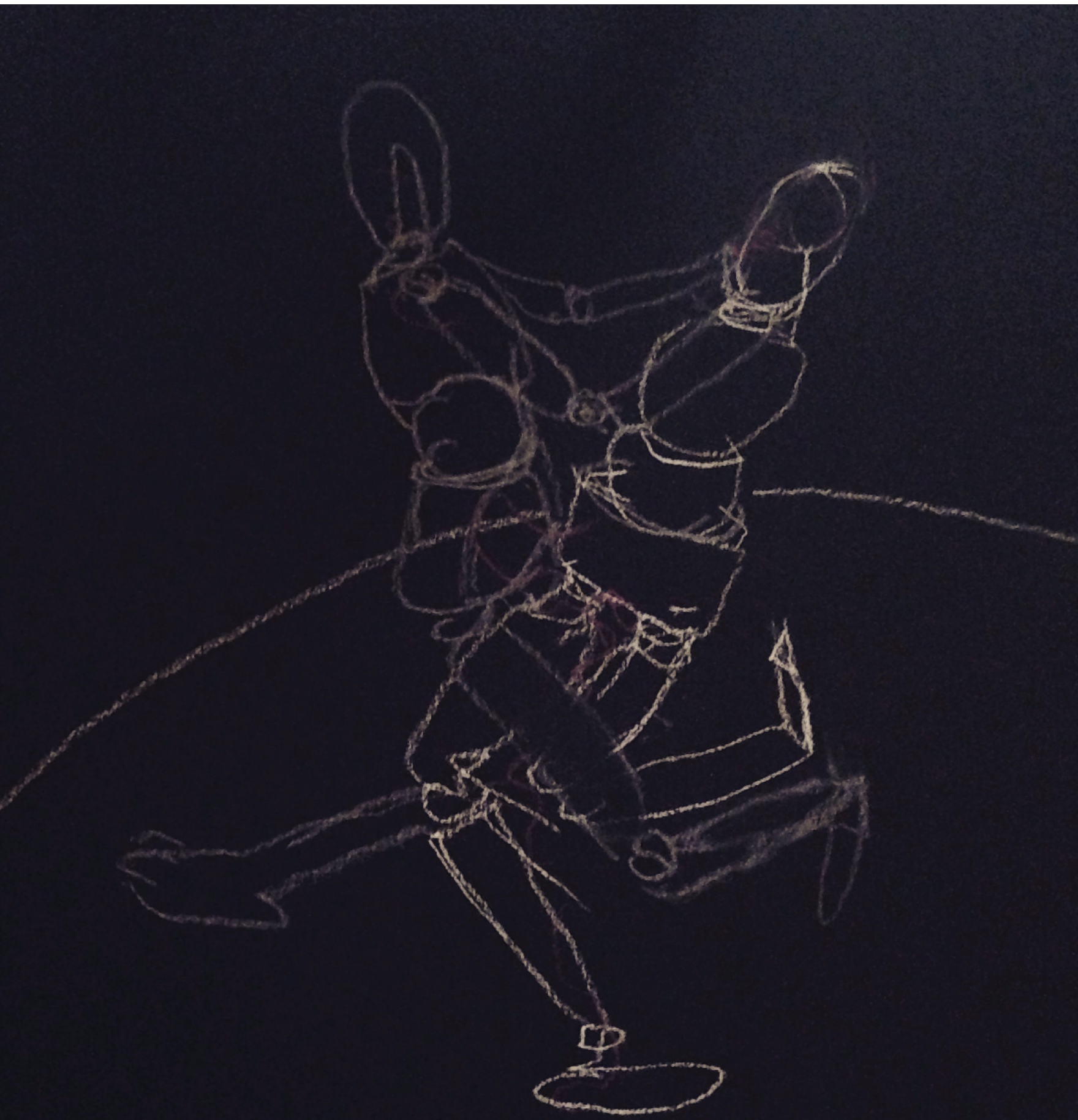
Wise up to the Marks

In his interview book, *A Bigger Message*, David Hockney describes how the photographic image gives an uncanny sense of the “real,” of the supposed phenomenological. But the photographic image doesn’t in any way give a sense of our sense of seeing as humans. We don’t see in photographs. We don’t experience the world or know or remember it as images in the sense of photographic images. Of course, we remember images and images become our memory of . . . perhaps, images themselves, but that’s not how we experience things. Photographs are these strange, unreal things that have taken up the world and had us believe them as an image of the real, just as Brunelleschi did.

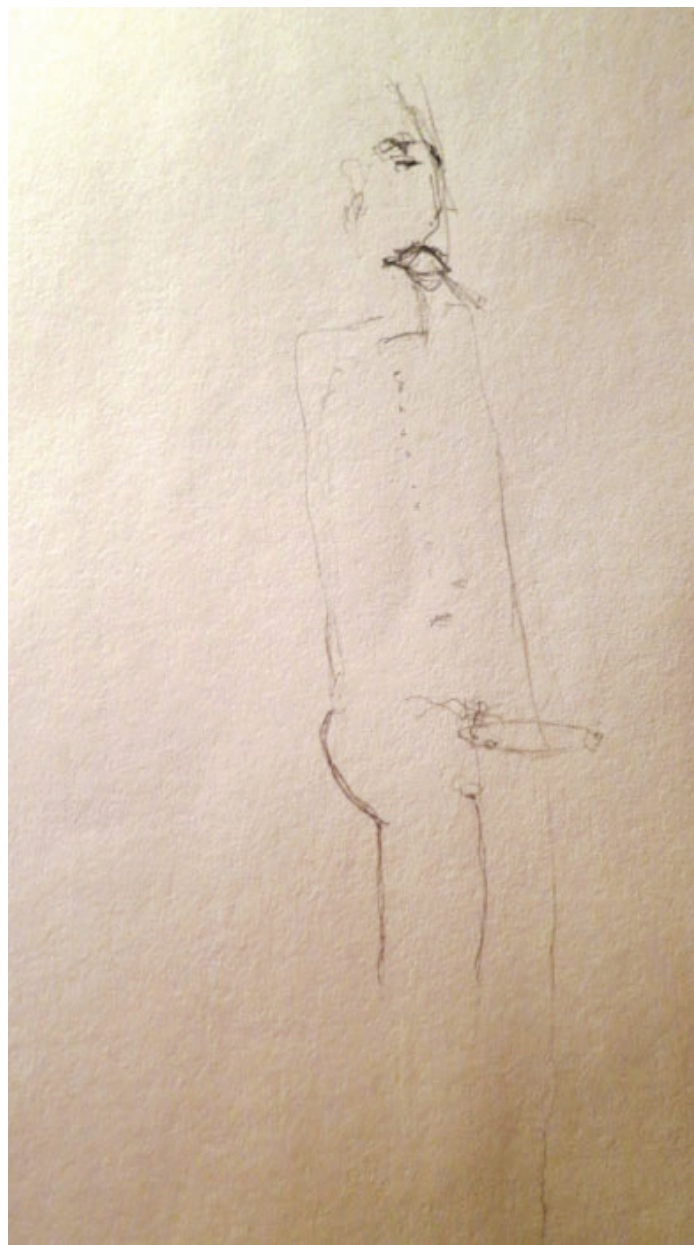
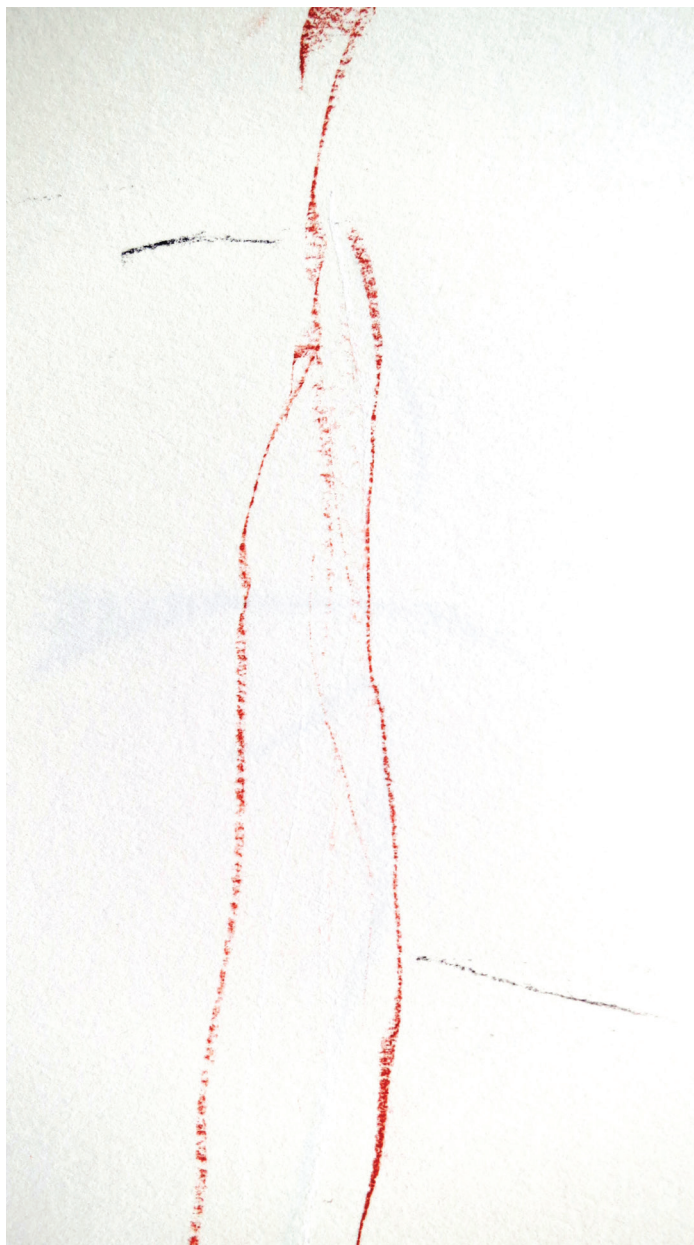


In painting and drawing with the starting point of critique as marks, mark making, a critique I suspect that emerges more and more with the movement away from depiction, away from narrative forms, much contemporary critique turns its attention to the character of the brush mark, or the line, or markings.

As we move away from depiction, from the pictorial, we move to the perceptual still with recognition. The movement from Manet to Cezanne. There is something still to perceive in Cezanne’s depiction of his perception. His seeing accords to sight. A particular kind of sight, the perception of sight.







Drawing is, of course, the opening of a form. And a series of marks, the tip of a point when moved across a picture plane, will describe a line. And Rembrandt's drawing is Rembrandt's own manner of drawing. And his manner of drawing affirms his singularity, his originality, his know-how, his savoir faire.

Now, what must not have been given in a form in order to form itself, for those marks to form? As Jean-Luc Nancy lucidly says in *The Pleasure of Drawing*,

Drawing is not a given, available, form formed. On the contrary it is the gift, invention, uprising, or birth of form. That a form comes is drawings formula, and this formula implies at the same time a desire, for and anticipation of form, a way of being exposed to what comes, to an unexpected occurrence, or to a surprise that no prior formality will have been able to proceed or perform.

From marks to forms, to motifs and themes . . .

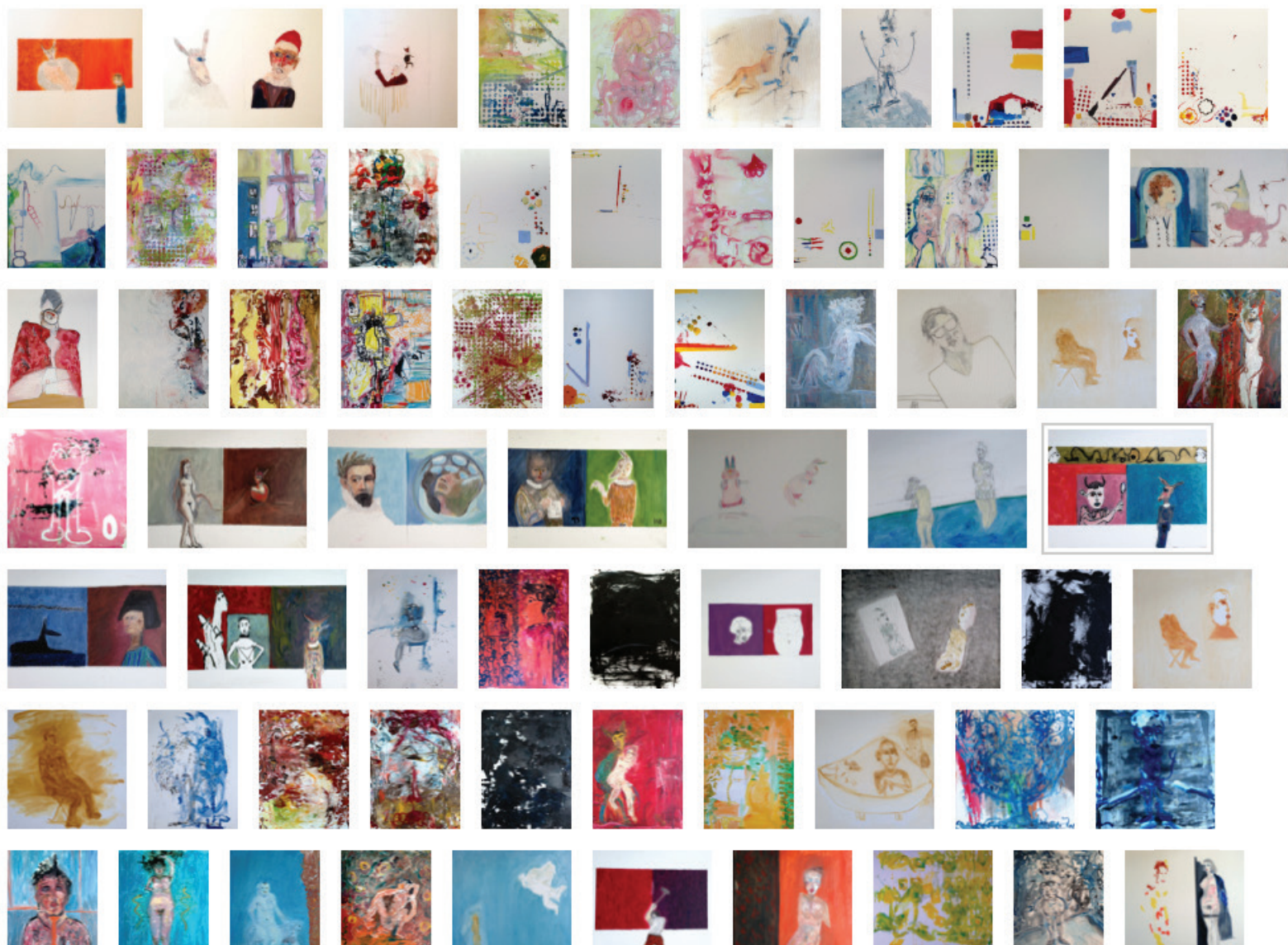
Masquerading Asses: The Ass in Me

Sinful behavior was ubiquitous despite the religious fervor of the Middle Ages and the Inquisition in eighteenth century Spain. To simplify church doctrine the medieval clergy employed the bestiary, a manuscript that categorizes animals and fantastic creatures by traits that symbolize moral behavior. This analysis argues that the iconography and allegories found within medieval bestiaries influenced prints depicting human, animal, and hybrid figures within Francisco de Goya's (1746–1838) series *Los Caprichos*. However, in contrast to the medieval bestiary which employs animal symbolism for morally didactic purposes, Goya reworks the composition of bestial allegories in order to enlighten the viewer on the immorality that is innate, universal, and destructive to humanity

(<https://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc84365/>)

I cannot recognize myself in photographs. Not quite, not exactly, but there is an affect of feeling in me, that I am able to realize or to see with painting.











Masquerading Asses. They are very pleased that, thanks to their dress, they are taken for people of real standing. These are the funniest of Goya's drawings. Three asses in human dress are standing on hind legs in different states of self-satisfaction. They are thrilled when a boy, looking at their clothes, mistakes them for members of the social elite. He doffs his hat and bows before them. With hooves sticking out of their cuffs and donkeys' heads out of their collars, Goya has given his asses very recognisably human expressions.

*orange yellow burnt sienna charcoal black flames. sparking
controlling igniting fire is one of the most exhilarating and
terrifying moments. what an extraordinary thing.*

I am thinking now of making paintings with rare metals. If painting is a material trace, made up of marks, of materials, acrylics, oils, pigments, polymers, binders, etc., what happens to these materials under certain conditions of global precipitation and temperature patterns? And what if they are not made by hand? In other words, what if painting is another kind of recording or marking that imprints an atmospheric condition on a surface? Consider a painting made by a computer model that explores such possible futures. Think of a painting as a not-quite-human recording; that is, rather than the assurance of uniqueness and the singular vision of a person and their hand/eye, perhaps a new painting is an indeterminate outcome of an algorithm. Not of the action of the body, but a modeling of conditions of the planet.

If Anselm Kiefer makes a historical and allegorical painting by bringing trauma to the surface of earthly materials (or Alberto Burri, with distressed burlap), a new materiality for new 'painting' would be making a 'painting' from computer simulations of such trauma or excess or patterns. Painting, as an outcome of a model. Action painting as the actions of information flows, models and codes, a contemporary painting would enactment such material flows in new kinds of inscription.

Painting, imaging, recording, coding, an ensemble of mark making activities, can, look back, but also look forward to new materials and conditions of not only being in the world but visioning worlds.



Here is Yves Klein.

The suit is fantastic. He performs fire. He dances with it. He tames it. He records it.

He is not making an image. An image results from an imprint of this dance. It's recorded, imprinted on canvas, a stretched canvas—it's an action painting.

Cooked Raw

These new watercolors present various scenarios of pleasure, power and desire, Marc wants to explore how we live and exist as bodies and appetites.

The artist like the cook is a cultural agent who ensures that the natural become cooked and socialized. Yet underlying this process of socialization, this cooked, is indeed something that remains raw. In our overly cooked global circuit we can not fail to see the raw everywhere. Beneath the sheen, the polish and veneer, the raw lies quietly in wait.

untitled 42. 2015. 50"x40". Pigment print, Epson velvet paper.



In addition to photographic, video and installation works over the years Marc Lafia has made a good many drawings and paintings. In these new watercolors, he presents various scenarios of pleasure, power and desire. There is no such thing as a universal body, as all bodies are cultural constructions and as such here Marc wants to explore how we live and exist as bodies and appetites, in relation to our affective sense, in relation to the inherent abstraction in line drawings.

Simultaneously whimsical and poignant, he depicts pleasure and distress at the limits of a kind of excess, as a human condition without remedy, as a kind of folly and burlesque. Starting with pencil line drawings he inks select lines with bamboo, colors with watercolors and then scans the work to print at almost life size. The intimacy of the works, now large, creates the effect of being pressed up close, maybe too close, to a lucid and guttural dream of scenes, mythic and imaginative, with an affect all too real. In turning to drawing Lafia wants to present an image that can escape the literalness of the photographic and to get inside the poetic dimension of an ongoing human condition.

Between 1964 and 1971 Claude Levi-Strauss published the four volume series, *Mythologiques*, focusing on the structure and "essence" of "savage" mythology. For Levi-Strauss, it was not simply empirical reality that influenced the researcher but the mind itself that structures what it perceives. Myth contains, at the deep level, a conflict between polarized values, hence the cooked and the raw, darkness/light, land/sea, man/woman, and the myth story sets about to reconcile these supposed opposites. Every culture tries to control these categories by defining them as either "taboo" or "sacred". Try as we may to keep such distinctions, soon they leak and bleed into each other, crossing boundaries and cohabit.

The artist like the cook is a cultural agent who ensures that the natural become cooked and undergoes a process of socialization. Yet underlying this process of socialization, this cooked, there remains the raw. In our overly cooked global circuit we can not fail to see the raw everywhere. Beneath the sheen, the polish and veneer the raw if not the rotten lies quietly in wait just beneath the surface. And it is precisely the other side of the cooked that Lafia wants to map in his exhibition presenting various instrumentalities and scenarios which pleasure, power, communication and desire are at the same time cooked, raw and rotten.





My Love. 2015. 50"x40". Pigment print, Epson velvet paper.



Birds. 2015. 50"x40". Pigment print, Epson velvet paper.



26

Image
as
Object
as
Situation

A 3D installation that starts with the desire to map a world that takes various images of the positivism of the rational technologic view and shows it hand-made as some kind of imaginary. The image is of many works together. So imagine all of the pieces in the last image below in one room.

The short explanation:

I want to rearrange the figure/field relationship in the traditional 2-dimensional image and make it spatial. To give back to the image something of its actuality before it gets compressed, made flat and shrunk down.

In this new work I take 2D images and re-stage them—a kind of re-photographing, reimagining, re-imagining both the image itself and the contents of the image in new environments. Images constructed and viewed conventionally on screens, or a page, or a wall, are flat and presented at certain prescribed aspect ratios, and this itself conveys a certain meaning. The works here refigure the space of the photograph where images of maps, illustrations, big data, all kinds of images become spatial and that refigures them narratively and ontologically.

By cutting out persons and objects in the original photographs and re-staging them as shapes in spaces, the representations get lost, disappear, reappear into a labyrinth of histories vanquished like in a Marukami novel, folds that get lost, disappear, reappear between archers and shadows, archives of biologic specimens become fish, glaciers, toboggans, data graphics reshaped, repurposed, angled into new figures, together becoming an unmappable place, becoming more biology than set off as images in geometry. More an event than a thing. More poetry than prose.

By cutting out and shaping indeterminate figures from these once framed and stable images and arranging them spatially, the gallery becomes more of stage, almost a set, a pop up sculpture book, that immerses the viewer amongst fluctuating shapes, thoughts, materials.

So that's the idea, to fabricate these pieces and bring them into the gallery. They can be printed on aluminum like the totems or dibond, cut into shapes and printed on. They are made to stand up from the floor, be wall mounted or hang from the ceiling.

The long explanation:

In search of a new project I've gone down various paths where things for a moment seem clear only to slip away into the ether. These include personal biography, where I imagined my French Catholic mother's family being the

torturing inquisitioners of my father's Spanish Arabic Jewish Sufi family and on with the dispersal diaspora and continual reversal of roles by all family may have taken up, then a documentary on Future Cities, Surveillance Capital, Big Data, Climate Dynamics, the movements of people and data, in their models and perceptions, written as long form narrative, then a photography show on the uncanny accidents of search, and the seduction of the formal structures of info graphics and big data, then a four screen video installation on the body, the sensual, death, algorithmic society and machine language, and then a performance piece turning all this into a contemporary fable with the idea of being turned into a bird by a Sufi mystic that then narrates the above in a contemporary ambulatory performance piece. This idea occurred to me because in the personal biography I wanted to reach back in time when my family's surname was Abulafia, the legendary Kabbalist who took from the Sufis the idea that God stands not outside us, but within us, sharing Spinoza's thought, all is god. In epic Sufi poetry, the bird is a symbol of the travel of the soul which is, of course, everywhere, and in this everywhere sense disappears. This took me to spending much time listening to Alan Watts on Zen and I was coincidentally invited for a 2017 residency at Headlands in San Francisco where Alan Watts lived. The performance piece led me to the idea of doing a kind of contemporary Beckett/Joan Jonas/William Kentridge/Mike Kelly/Robert Wilson piece of staged works with objects, scrim, video and lighting. So I began writing a narrative for performance and building these little sets that you see below.

The more I went down the path of a performance piece, I realized that even more than a film production, it requires a stage, a theatre, a controlled environment, a certain amount of gear, booking a place for an evening or more for an audience. The more I looked at the objects I was making for the stage, the more the stage seemed to me like a gallery space and the objects somewhere between sculpture and photography, something with many folds, beautiful shapes and now was more in the world of objects and perhaps though all this I've have found a direction to make some new unique works.

Images constructed and viewed conventionally on screens or a page or a wall are flat and presented at certain prescribed aspect ratios and this itself conveys a certain meaning. The works here refigure the space of the photograph and images of maps, illustrations, big data, all kinds of images become spatially and that refigures them narratively and ontologically.

I began to see this when cutting out persons and objects in the original photographs restaging them as new events. I did this in my *Pictures* series using Photoshop. But this seems to me very, very different. There is something here much more dimensional and spatial in placing the images and arranging them in space. It's not collage but more a mobile. It's not about the images, the representations, but how they become shapes in space in an almost unmappable space, the labyrinth of a history vanquished like in a Marukami novel, folds that get lost, disappear, reappear between archers and shadows, archives of biologic

specimens that become fish, data graphics reshaped, repurposed, angled, becoming more biology than set off as images in geometry. More an event than a thing. More poetry than prose.

And the objects here become ensembles of meaning they are individual and can work as stand alone pieces in other collections, other arrangements.

The picture frame, the archive, big data, the gallery, the white cube, all give a rational dimension to the work of art.

Here the portrait becomes data, the image becomes environment, shapes and spaces. There is front and back, up and down, yesterday and today, here and then gone, all in relation to an embodied viewer whose gaze is ambulatory.

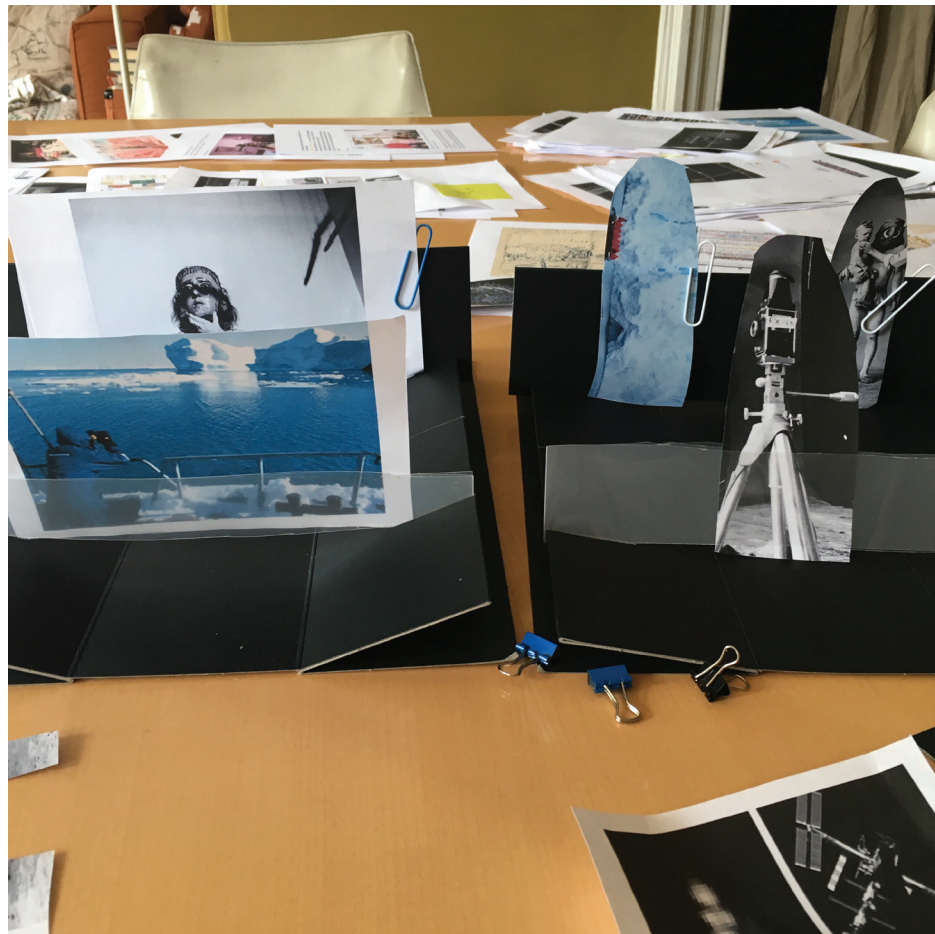
There is something here withdrawn, which also interest me, the narrative of the performance, the documentary, all these are here and yet disappear here.

By cutting out and shaping indeterminate figures from these once framed and stable images and arranging them spatially, the gallery becomes more of stage, almost a set, a pop up sculpture book, that immerses the viewer amongst fluctuating shapes, thoughts, materials. (1)

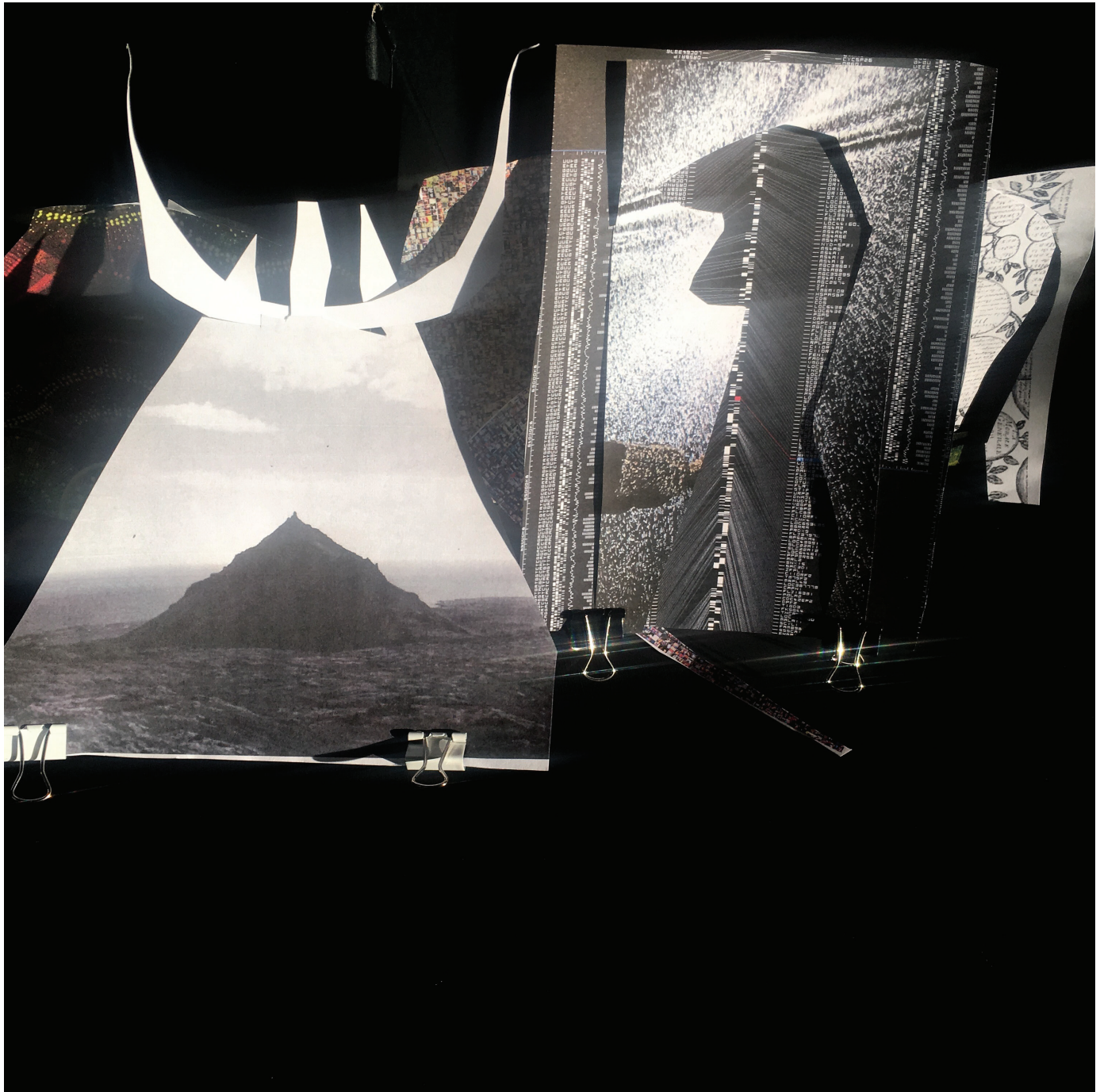
So that's the idea, to fabricate these pieces and bring them into the gallery.

Here is how I am thinking of doing it.

I build the models, the sets in miniature like you see below.







27

**Come
Together**

'Outside Your Bubble," or "Putting on the Public"

Re: come together (participatory art proposal)

As I observed the interaction with the billboards in the Shenzhen Biennale, it occurred to me, what about a work that would bring two people together. Any two people who were writing something on that board. Two people, in a one on one encounter, but presented in a public space, putting on view, the social media convention of meeting up and how that happens. In some way the work responds to the not so recent exhibition, *The Artist Is Present*, with a work in which we are all present to each other and public.

I am still very keen on my idea, and think more than ever it is quite pertinent, exciting and quite human, performative and interactive. Something always to be aware of: there is no technology over there and us here. It is us and we become entrained to it. You mentioned you were doing commissions again and I think this idea a very good one to put on the public. What say you?



The gallery or museum space has two sitting chairs facing each other.

Visitors find two people talking there, sometimes. Sometimes the chairs are empty.

On the blackboard are polaroids and statements on stickies left there by those who've sat in the chairs. With this is an explanation of the terms within which the two people have met, that is a description and flowchart of the algorithm that has made the match.

Not unlike any number of social networking sites the people sitting with each other have through the mailing list of the gallery signed up to meet each for 20 mins in the gallery exhibition space.

The email ask is very simple.

Would you like to be part of a participatory art project? Once you've answered the following 2 questions we'll set up a time for you to meet a person matched for you and to meet at the gallery and converse in the gallery space for 20 minutes. Here are the 2 questions.

What's are three of your passion/s

Would you like to meet someone with your passion or someone on our list randomly?

A specially made algorithm will be used to analyze the passion statement and to match participants.

This participatory art work puts on view the private everyday encounters people make through social media. It let's us have a look at the criteria of parsing and selecting that sculpts such encounters. It brings and openly invites the gallery or museum's community into conversation and dialogue.

**we can augment the selection pool of candidates by reaching out beyond the gallery's community if we want.*

28

Realms,
an Archive
of the Sensible

Let's step back for a moment and think about images and where they come from, both personal and collective. Think about your iPhone, Google, and other search engines and think about all this electronic data, everywhere, including your credit card transactions, your train pass swipes, all those cameras, all the data and images you take and are taken of you all on a daily basis. Where do they all go?

Once, perhaps, they went into an archive, well certain images and records.

The word "archive" derived from the Greek *Arkheion*, a house, or the residence of the superior magistrates. Images and documents were kept in the houses of the powerful. As such the archive more often preserves the history of the victors, while presenting such history as reality or scientific truth. The archive is a realist machine, a body of power and knowledge, and it sustains itself by repetition. More precisely, the authority of traditional archives controls and regulates the reproduction of their items.

(Hito Steyerl, "Politics in the Archive: Translations in Film," on Jacques Derrida)

As much as certain governments try to contain image and information circulation, we are all well aware that this control of circulation has gone and access to the world's images is pervasive. With digital technologies and network culture, images are always already in a constant state of copying, degradation and remixing. As Eduardo Navasse argues in *Remix Theory*:

The reason for this is that the possibilities of cultural production, both popular and elitist have reached an efficiency based on increasing compression of material, that has superseded the postmodern period. And it is the compression of content, the obsession of condensing material for faster consumption and assimilation that gives Remix public legitimation.

In other words, the remix, the representation and pervasive circulation of images gives them no grounding, no context, no meaning outside the event of their presentation.

So what to do with all these images? What do we want with them? Perhaps it is to see ourselves, to see what we cannot see, to see beyond human perception. Perhaps we want to see how we see. I will say it again, to see how we see. That would be my usual turn, to see the seeing of seeing.

Here I want to enact the image of the sensible. First as a slide show interpenetrating each other, leaking into one another. So, first the collection and where and how it starts. (from *To Create Images is to Create Thought or Why I am so Afraid to Think*)

The concept moves between a four-screen video installation, a series of slide projections, a film, the production of photographs.

Realm 1: Bodies as blocks of sensations, marks and recording, touched by hand, to be touched, palpitations

Struck by the portraits of Lucien Freud wearing his painter's apron, looking more like a butcher's apron, with his models I wanted to look at the body depicted, the body made available for depiction. The elderly painter and his bodies, the various models and the site of these bodies. These bodies one at a time, one by one. With this is the photographer, each positioning posing bodies, behind the 4 x 5 large format cameras. In this room, in this realm, a great variety of models, all ages, all types, a variety of photographers, bodies and tableaux of bodies.

notes:

the intimacy of the painter and the body

the sensuality of paint

the distance of the lens

the painter possessed by his model

the photographer posing his subject

guy bourdin yves klein

the paint blood paint saturated messy apron of the painter

the clean hands on the tripod of the large format camera

the cat in the room

the painter inspects eyes the model poses the model









Still Dots #36 — Crosscuts — Walker Ar...

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David Hemmings in Michelangelo Antonioni's "Blow-Up" (1966) Image © Warner Bros.

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



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



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Okay, that's history. Feedback and guitar smashing in 66, before, I believe, either Jimi or The Who. But this was the primer on hipness that we had been ...

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Realm 2: The machine that sees, atomized nodes

In the next room is the data scientist, she looks at the aggregate of images, where individuals become statistics, where images, text messages, likes, stand in place of hordes, swarms, mobs, catastrophe and violence. All disorder here becomes formalized, indexed, classified, codified, ordered and made into extraordinarily attractive cascading graphs or set into neat little boxes and parsed by even neater models and algorithms.

The best an algorithm can do is amalgamate. It takes discrete things, assumes certain relationships between them, then streams them together to look for 'like' things. But you, a person, is a continuous state of becoming. Your taste, your metabolism, is not made of discrete things or moments. It is a becoming. An algorithm is premised on arithmetic: *this + this + that*. You are a calculus, a trajectory, a duration.

notes:

*the archivist the information architect / professor
student girl friend*

*5 essays – each an organization of images, an arrangement, an
inflection, an autopsy, data, clinical*

*she arranges the photographs prints of photographs
everywhere*

photos collected

photos on walls

projected

computer screens

occasionally she looks out the window

sees real trees

sky

we see the photos that have informed the other realms

in arrays like hockney wall

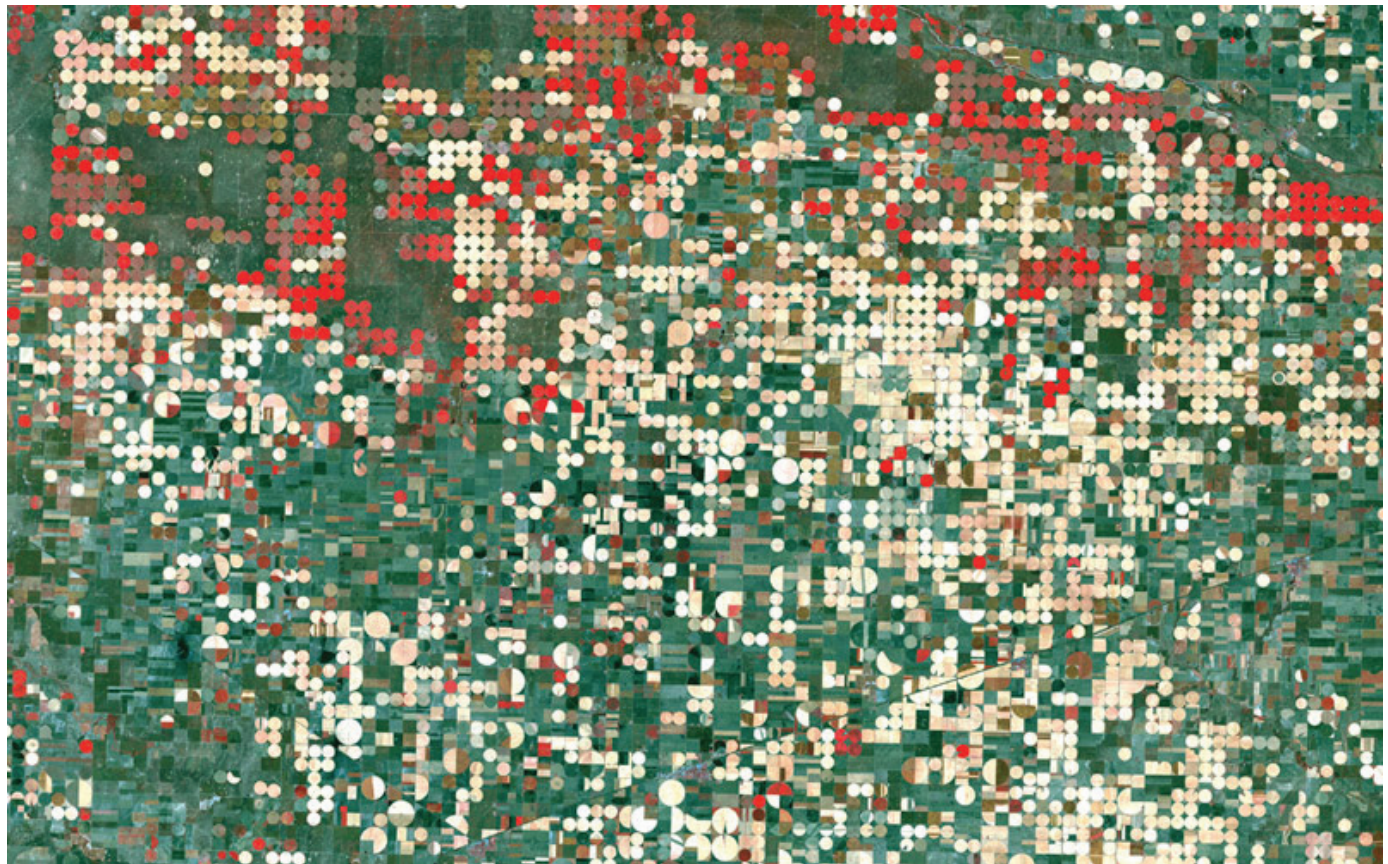
warburg

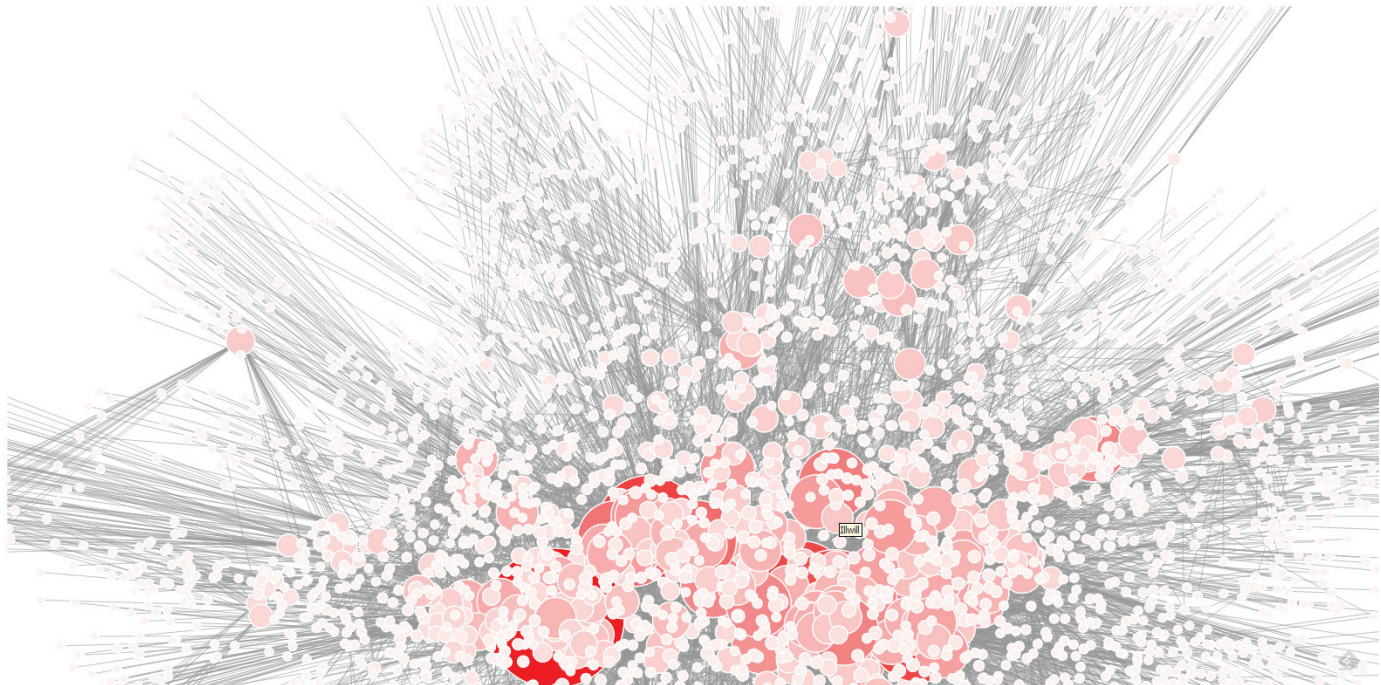
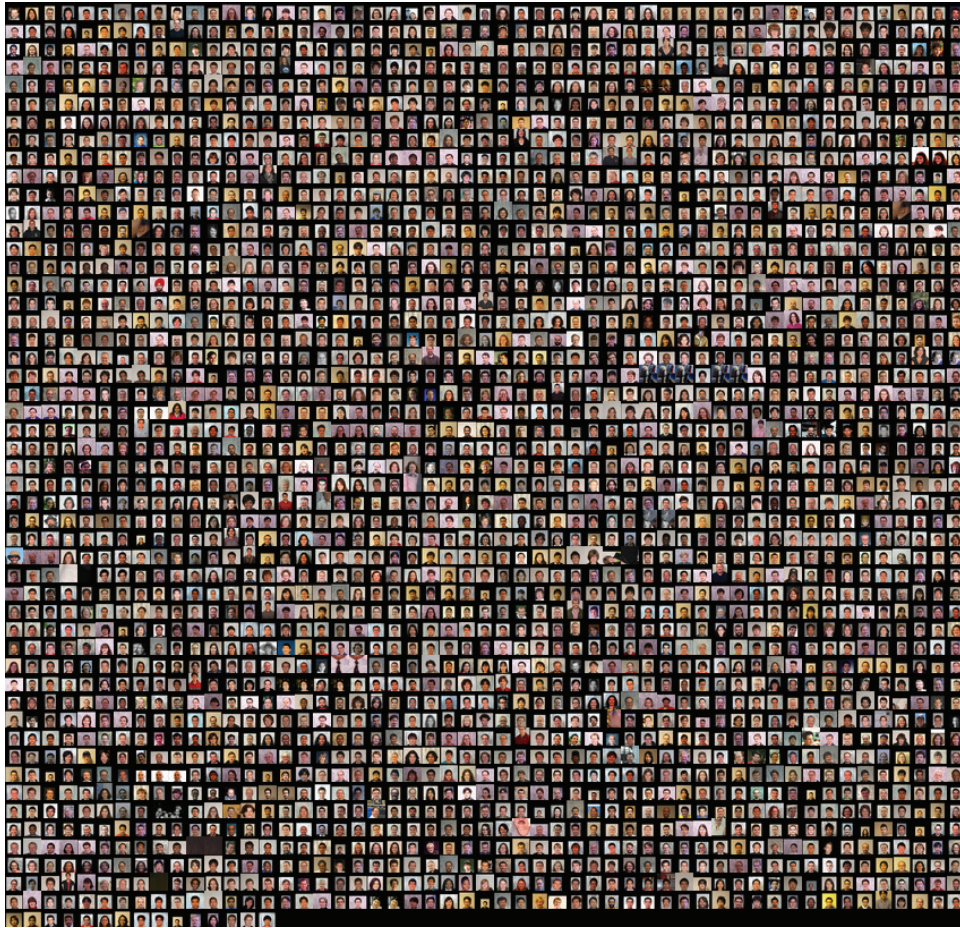
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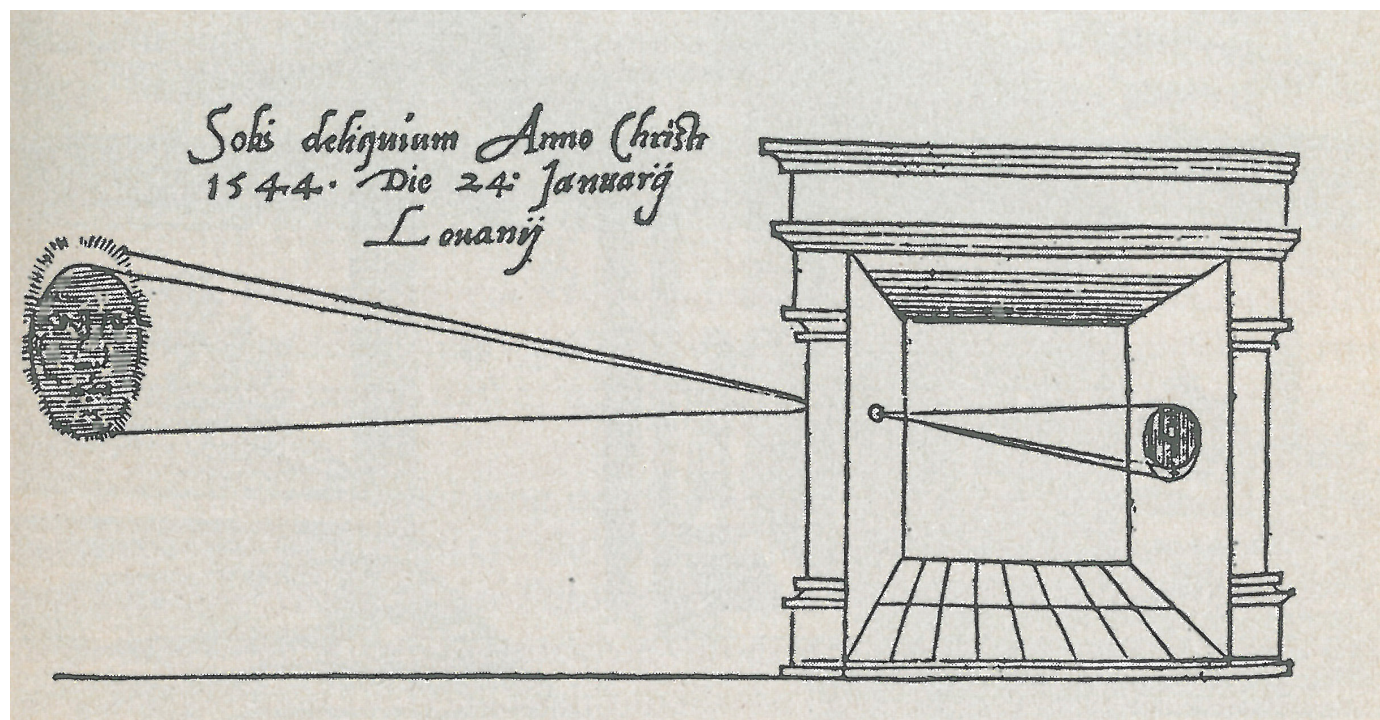
sebald

search













The Holocaust | The Espresso Stalinist

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5.6 – 6.1 million Jews 3.0 – 3.5 million Polish Jews 2.5 – 3.5 million non-Jewish Poles 3.5 – 6 million other Slavic civilians 2.5 – 4 million Soviet POWs 1 – 1.5 million political dissidents 200,000 – 800,000 Roma & Sinti 200,000 – 300,000

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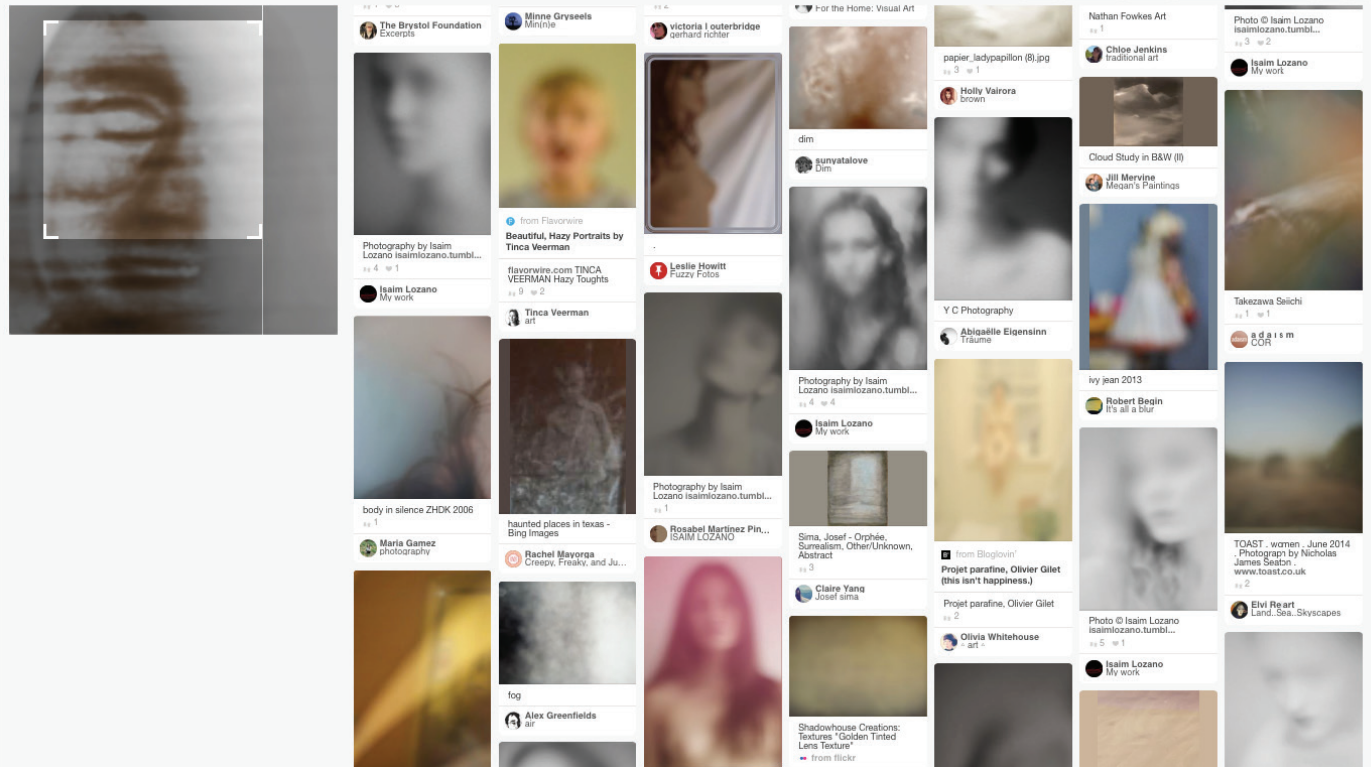
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Visually similar results







Realm 3

In this realm, all that is is instinct, emotion, madness, bodily fear, violence. But to what end and for what reason and in what manner? In a scenographic way, this would be performance, otherwise it is on the street. It must be wanton, the crowd, madness, delirium, panic. This would be an eruption of violence and this would suggest another violence, a systematic violence, a keeping the lid on, so the riot breaks out. This systematic or institutional violence, this army of police, law, capital that keeps in check, that is their constantly, it's only this eruption that shows this violence. This is not a violence of ritual or sacrament, this is a violence of control. This is the uniform, the border.

notes:

mad murder cultist murder spree

mostly off screen

participants coming on the screen all bloodied up

richard lester style

some what religious, messianic

there becomes a rift in the group

a faction believes in the body the here and the now and the

decay

the other believes in a way to somewhere else

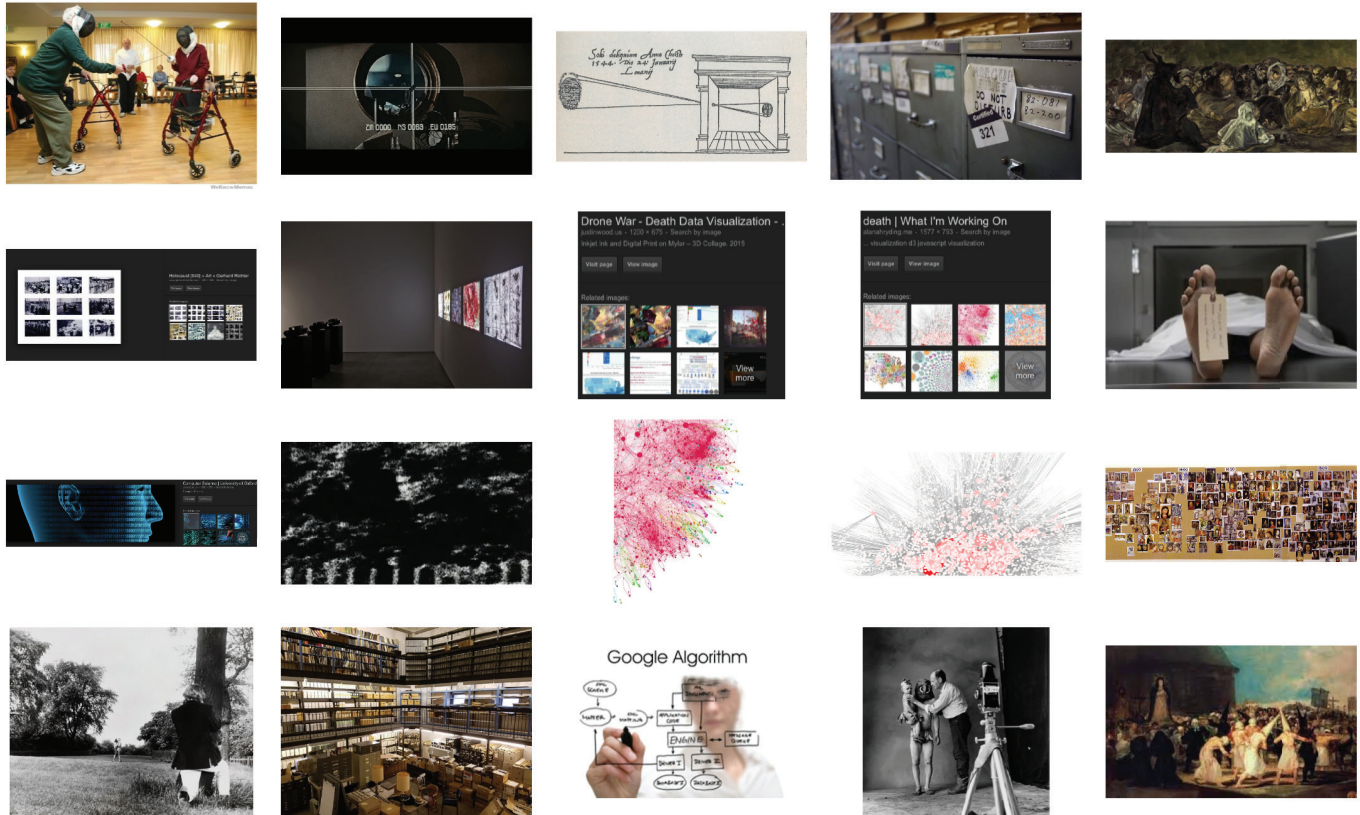
sort of goyaesque meets la noir meets mike kelley











Realm 4: The body that hurts, that's gone on too long, without vitality, the body that rots, smells, is dragged about

notes:

this is the realm of the aged,
 the mortuary, hospice, autopsy, accident
 writing on the body
 files on the bodies
 images and bodies, an analysis in fragments, pixels and genes,
 a dissection, a mapping



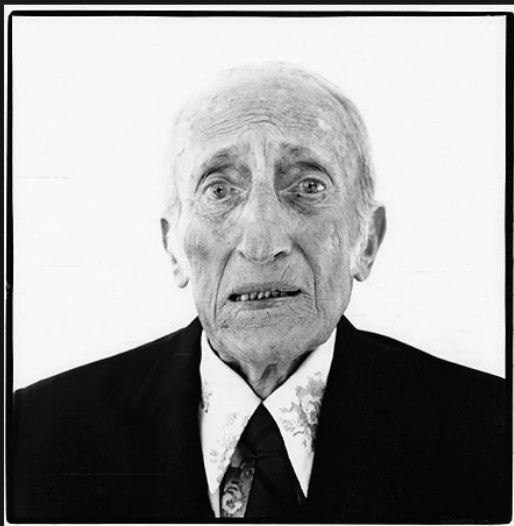
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Realms (at the meta level)

*sacrament killing prayer community
dying decay death community
representation sex eroticism intimacy
analysis logos instrumentality*

Realms (across screens)

*the teenage girl possessed by a certain hysteria
the analyst possessed by a certain hysteria
the painter looking at the couch
the analyst on the couch looking at the painter looking at the
photographer looking at the girl looking out the window looking
in a mirror*

Note 1

performance

*-how do i put myself in the performance?
why am i collecting all the these photographs. for reference,
to actually use, to imitate, to re-enact, to rotoscope, draw in
projection, make animation out of.
-taylor mac, how does he construct his narratives*

performance piece

*-realms
-triste tropiques (passages on the new world)
-james baldwin clip on the white man
-black panthers
-cross pollinate that with kobo daishi
-to hell with humanity
-fabric pieces
-performance (actors)*

ideas

- is my body in this piece*
- am i drawing myself*
- read through original script*
- write performance script, pull together pictures,*
screen/scrim architecture
- a work on mis-reading images, the realms archive or and*
performance work of material culture and voyage, pilgrimage or
conquest
- work towards performance piece / script*

Note 2

Artist, psychoanalyst, and feminist theorist Bracha Ettinger presents an original theoretical exploration of shared affect and emergent expression, across the thresholds of identity and memory. Ettinger works through Lacan's late works, the anti-Oedipal perspectives of Deleuze and Guattari, as well as object-relations theory to critique the phallocentrism of mainstream Lacanian theory and to rethink the masculine-feminine opposition. She replaces the phallic structure with a dimension of emergence, where objects, images, and meanings are glimpsed in their incipency, before they are differentiated. This is the matrixial realm, a shareable, psychic dimension that underlies the individual unconscious and experience.

Concerned with collective trauma and memory, Ettinger's own experience as an Israeli living with the memory of the Holocaust is a deep source of inspiration for her paintings, several of which are reproduced in the book. The paintings, like the essays, replay the relation between the visible and invisible, the sayable and ineffable; the gaze, the subject, and the other.

29

Art
as
Biography

Constellations and Coordinates

In our globalized world, the idea of the individual and the contours of the self have become increasingly permeable while at the same time hardened. The tensions between the qualities of the fluid and the fixed, the flows of information and the landlocked mines of precious metals, the orthodox and the psychedelic, perception management and predictive analytics of big data, what can be and what is, such contractions are found in these same said individuals, para-states, social groups, nations and corporations. All of this raises the question that perhaps the very idea of the individual has been an illusion. And as powerful and empowering the idea of the individual has been, perhaps it's time to put it to rest or at the very least refigure it again.

How can we conceptualize an idea of a single individual in a specific moment and time when the individual is continually composed and decomposed by other individuals by processes of constant movements of association and repulsion?

If individual things (*res singulares*) exist only as a consequence of the existence of other individual things (EIP28), with which they participate in an infinite network of connections (Balibar 1997:27). Notice here that this also implies that causality must not be understood in the sense of a linear succession of events, but rather as a multiplicity of connections of causal links between individuals, which are made up of more simple and more complex individuals all causally related.... Otherwise said, every individual is constantly composed and decomposed by other individuals with which it enters into contact through a process of individuation, which involves both the *infra-individual* and the *supra-individual* levels (Balibar 1997:27). And it is in order to render this complexity and plurality that Balibar argued individuality must be understood as a transindividuality (For those who like to trace the origins of this ontology of the transindividual, Balibar draws inspiration from Gilbert Simondon's *L'individuation psychique et collective*). Individuals thus understood are therefore never atoms, events, let alone subjects, given once for all. They are processes, the result of constant movements of association and repulsion that connect more simple individuals with other simple individuals, but also with more complex ones that constantly do and undo a body.

(Chiara Bottici, "Bodies in plural: Towards an anarcha-feminist manifesto," talking about Etienne Balibar's *Spinoza: From Individuality to Transindividuality*)

At the same time we must ask if this notion of not being a single individual but a continually becoming transindividual, for many a liberatory idea, an aspirational one, is it not naive or utopian in a world increasingly managed by software protocols, surveillance, border controls, hardened identities and identifications.

How, then, can we account for this self oscillating between these positions, negotiating them? A self that may feel permeable and discontinuously continuous while seen and indexed as this body, this person, this specific body, with this name, this gene code, this passport, this log in, this facially recognized thing by software control?

The politics of liberation from a fixed self, then, would appear to be in direct contrast with flows of global capital, resource control, the success of collective identity politics, ethnic and religious strife, bodies needing to be regulated and policed increasingly through automated systems.

To locate and address these tensions I have turned to my body, my self, and the histories, as fractured and fragmented as they are, of my family.

History accounts for the written record where as archeology (and art) is concerned with material traces – how to forge or create a contemporary and material history of me as an object of experience, myself as the object and subject experienced that is a figure of the contemporary and figured by the contemporary. I am then the contemporary or rather a contemporary. But with whom and to whom and in extension?

What ‘me’ and why contemporary? In me all things contemporary figure me, and all things that were and ever where figure the contemporary.

Why me? In putting forward a person, an individual experience, I might find the tensions and give the experience of the contemporary self.

Me 1

The artist looks across 500 years to locate coordinates of intensities in sight, sound, taste, place, and language, starting with the histories of his parents and grandparents. “Very quickly I found myself ungrounded and uncertain,” though I do know that my father voluntarily converted to Catholicism at 19 after being for hundreds, maybe thousands, of years a Sephardic Jew. He changed his name from *Abulafia* to *Lafia*. Abraham Abulafia was said to be the founder of the prophetic Kabbalah, 1291. He was a ceaseless wanderer who believed himself the messiah and with his last book, *Words of Beauty*, all traces of him were lost.

My mother’s surname *Patenaude*, from the Latin phrase *pater noster*, our father, a metonymic occupational name for a maker of rosary beads and meaning also “one who sang or chanted.” Both my parents then were in search of the supreme and the divine, and both were in search of the ecstatic, and both, because of these desires found themselves at odds with the secular world, with the geopolitics of their day. Each had experienced a diaspora, persecution, migration, the comfort and solace of their beliefs and many uncanny contradictions. My father in his dying cried out to be held and received in the bosom of the god depicted by the rosary draping the crucifix above his bed. A god in whose name his ancestors were persecuted and forced to leave Spain.

Similarly, Catholics in the west of France where my mother was from in the name of reason during the French revolution had property destroyed and confiscated. Meanwhile, other relatives sent money to Netherlands. To know the number of countries, nationalities, conversions, intermarriages, all the comings and goings of all those connected to my parents is impossible. The contradictions and dualities of identity the displacements, adaptations, the reversal of roles, the becoming of the other centuries later, even marrying those (as if they could still be “those”) that once persecuted them (perhaps unaware or even uninterested as this was long ago and in another country), all of this seems to me to be markers of the global and the contemporary.

As Edward Said wrote in *Culture and Imperialism*,

We are taught to venerate our nations and admire our traditions. We are taught to pursue their interests with toughness and in disregard for other societies.

I want in this project to trace and map these, to imaginatively and productively work with them, to make works out of this.

How does this come to be offered as an object of experience? And conversely, how can we use contemporaneity as a hermeneutic to understand contemporary art?

themes, persons, readings

colonialism

pilgrimage

tourism

travel

frantz fanon

peter osborne (history of the present)

history as performance and empirical

grasp the present aspire to a unity of the present the contemporary aspires to being the condition of historical intelligibility of social experience unless you can understand or totalize your experience geopolitically there is a sense you can't grasp your own present. if you don't grasp your own present the bits you haven't grasp wind up doing nasty things to you.

the fiction of the relative unity of the present, the contemporary, is a global fiction, a fiction thinking in terms of the social spaces of communities, cultures, nations, societies.

the internationalist imaginary of the last 150 years

transnational of social spaces of displacement

geopolitical differentiation and temporal intensification

the coming together of different times that constitutes the contemporary and the relation between these social spaces in which these times are embedded are the two main axis along which historical meaning of contemporary art is plotted.

In my early years and teens, I could sense an explosive desire for social justice, for inner exploration, for psychological and spiritual deepening, for sexual pleasure and play, to find not only a deeper sense of self, but also deepened awareness of the cosmos and its ecology. My father's last name was Abulafia, a Sephardic Jewish name, which he changed to Lafia. The specificity of my genealogy, my heritage and any of its traditions was unimportant, something I did not aspire to as I was a person of the earth, of my psyche, sensual and experiential.

Those persons and their ideas and ideals and rallying cries including the Black Panthers, R. D. Laing, Carl Sagan, John Lennon, William Burroughs, Timothy Leary, David Bowie, the Maharishi, Gloria Steinem, Gregory Bateson. For certain readers, very unfamiliar names. All put forward ideas of knowing the self, exploding language and gender roles and reaching inner space and outer space literally and metaphorically. By fourteen, fifteen, sixteen years old this was the trajectory: to more deeply get close to myself, my surroundings, each other; and with everyone doing this, a more just and harmonious world would ensue. Personal awareness would lead to personal liberation and a new planetarily aware social order. It's kind of extraordinary to write this, the aspiration of it, the zeitgeist of it, given today's inward turning to nationalism, a planet overheating, and a globalization and neoliberal order predicated on consumerism that would lift all humanity. Less than ten years on after Godard had stopped making films for five to seven years and returned with *Every Man for Himself*, and the punk cry of *no future for you* exploded, and *Less Than Zero* appeared, with disappear here, a new world order, with the band New Order brought forward a new zeitgeist that would carry forward for the next twenty years, one of austerity, cyber wars, financial crisis, retrenched identity politics until the promise once again of the liberatory promise of the internet now almost twenty years on.

I write this to give a very condensed sense of the context of my formation where identity did not mean your sexual preference or race or your personal heritage. There was a very naive and optimistic sense of the possible. When I see clips of John Lennon and Yoko Ono, I am amazed at their extraordinary sense of the possible of exceeding the backgrounds they came from to go forward into a brave new world.

Art, then, would be a way to see and figure the world. Write myself into, with it. Just what myself was could never be an insistence on biography or biology but something experiential, experience both particular to me and indifferent of me. This is the odd, strange part. I don't want a hardened identity but the world gives you one. But what is this "world," there is no such thing as "this world." There are particular people, particular things, embodied and historical. The body is a limit and the me, only a small part of it, as in knowing,

my knowing is limited, but the world, all that I am made of is an infinite limit of becoming. So why take me so seriously? Well, because the others are, they have named me and I must deal with that naming as a social being. I must negotiate this naming, this naming that frames me.

When I think of the photograph, not the image, but the framing of the image, even in rephotography, it's the construction and movement of signs, this double or abstraction as well as a thing unto itself, and this lets me move about the names, the ideas, to unname and rename, to find and express a poetic. I am a signature that moves in a particular way.

French philosopher Michel Foucault detected a form of power for which traditional modes of inquiry lacked adequate analytical tools, that is, a form of power whose effect is to attach the subject to her own identity:

a form of power which makes individuals subjects,

these he called modes of subjectification.

Selfies do that, identity politics does that, nation states, race, all those things in the song Imagine John Lennon wanted us to let go of. For Lennon, Yoko, art and love and was his guide to the interior of himself. And that's where it all started.

So is it necessary to locate myself, geographically, genetically, sexually, racially—and why these categories, and why do I imagine it is a choice, this choice some will say is because I am “privileged,” and for some there is no choice. When James Baldwin goes to France, he sees very quickly, whomever people think he is, he is, for certain, American. My father, a Sephardic Jew, told me whoever people think you are, just say yes, that's who you are.

In the world of art,

politics and biography have merged and much art that is rooted in specific stories.
The artist plays his or her own perspective for a collective purpose.

What is selfhood and what is a body politic, a body being? Image, gesture, body being politics.

An identity is questioned only when it is menaced, as when the mighty begin to fall, or when the wretched begin to rise, or when the stranger enters the gates, never, thereafter, to be a stranger: the stranger's presence making you the stranger, less to the stranger than to yourself. Identity would seem to be the garment with which one covers the nakedness of the self; in which case, it is best that the garment be loose, a little like the robes of the desert, through which robes one's nakedness can always be felt, and sometimes, discerned. This trust in one's nakedness is all that gives one the power to change one's robes.



I imagine the more than five hundred notes entered into this “notes” program coming together as one work. I imagine myself experiencing them synesthetically in a virtual reality, in a tactile and sensate manner, embodied, in them in one evening; or as one book, an immersive film, seamless, ongoing, a yage experience and that being fantastically exciting. What is this form; film, performance, gallery show, lecture, opera, symposia, lectures, travelogue, messages to friends, blog posts, writings, talks, dreams, essay, lists, theoretical long-take, fragment, aphorism, speech, pedagogical manifesto? My “notes” program over the last year, has come to include, many quotes, writings, pictures, videos, music to bring forward an imagined sensate space. I am forever exploring this space, enamored, enthralled and exalted, open and overwhelmed, by all the life experiences that words, pictures, moving pictures and sounds convey and with that see the myriad narratives and definitions we live for ourselves. I know the experiences I am having are but one sliver of so many registers of experience, in time closed off to me and yet so many are possible and have been and are being lived. The distance between what we can experience and what we know increases every day. We can see so much of the archive of life from behind our keyboards and screens but our nervous system, our social being, can only live and digest so much. But the totality

of the human experience and more so the planetary and cosmic experience, whose agency, whose being, is one we can't access and can't give effective description to, as we can our own, and these have had and will continue to have and consist of, I imagine many extraordinary intensities, sensations, tastes, dimensions of form, matter, density, velocity and time that exceed our knowing. To sense these dimensions as realities, along side, equal to our own, more than our own, is the great opening to possible perceptions we might have or never have. Opening, then, the range of perceptions, my sensations and awareness, is what I want of this body, this being, even from the imagination, so that from varied directions I can experience, not as me, exactly, not as me at all really, feelings and sensations all to themselves.

being no one

I work for some time to write and conceptualize a work that is personal, about me

The work finds its form in the speculum. Anecdote, history, narrative, essay, epic poem, chronicle, testimony, sound, light, noise, the living theatre.

There are ten modules now with images and words to be performed, further visualized with video, projection, staging, dialogues, stop action animation, sound, enactment, movement.

The pieces are modules that connect through hashtags. They are nonlinear and can be begin and come on at any point. They intersect at odd angles and are permutable.

Everything is happening side by side and in parallel. Three screen projection, over head projection, photographs and videos and line animation and in front of this masks, dance, direct address and enactment.

birds copulation and death performance script

(description of visuals and word statements)

The body, a device to calculate the astronomy of the spirit.

A fireball, sun, graphic lines shower a stage, that feels like sail blowing on the wind of the sea or sheets on a laundry line

Andrew Masson drawing a flower organic person, then bones, piercing (a thousand years of non linear history)

Woman as pack mule from warrior now appears the automaton, the wooden figure that becomes

Young woman drawing portrait of a man turns into dance and language, man a recent invention

Bone, a thousand year of non-linear history
strata, deterritorialization and reterritorialization to map
the morphogenetic changes of the real.

In contemporary parlance the vehicle is the ego psychoactive
psychonaut psychoanalysis schizoanalysis

If people are not using their souls, well we come to repossess
them.

Kobo Daishi meets Rousseau, how westerners were forbidden.

Confessions is a "pilgrimage of grace [...] [a] retrac[ing]
[of] the crucial turnings of the way by which [Augustine] had
come. And since he was sure that it was God's grace that had been
his prime mover on that way, it was a spontaneous expression of
his heart that cast his self-recollection into the form of a
sustained prayer to God."

"The Way of the Heaven and Earth." Heaven is a multifaceted
term. Cheng Yi (1033-1107) of the Song Dynasty (960-1279),
Xinzhong Yao a modern author, and Li Yen (1421-94) a government
censor tried to unite the many different interpretations of
Heaven into one paragraph:

Spoken of as one, Heaven is the Way. Spoken of in its
different aspects, It is called heaven with respect to its
physical body, the Lord (Ti) with respect to its being
master, negative and positive spiritual forces with respect
to its operation, spirit (shen) with respect to its wonderful
functioning, and Ch'en with respect to its nature and feelings.

In the mind of Confucians, Heaven is the transcendental
power that guarantees harmony between the metaphysical and the
physical, between the spiritual and the secular, and between
human nature and human destiny.²

The imperial overseer.

Being no one

Levi-Strauss, a seance with tribal artifacts with Michael
Taussig.

Franny, the way of the pilgrim, part Ivy League girl meets
David Carradine martial artists wanders the earth.

It took some time as a child to understand that my father was
jewish and it took a much longer time to understand that jewish
people were not always the victims of history but could also be
perpetrators of violence and exclusion themselves.

The inner life. Brave new world. Now the narrator comes on
cybernetic hands. and then he drifts away and we are in a seance
with Claude Levi-Strauss but looking in through the glass is

the data scientist in a containment cell against possible culpability data, just doing my job, just showing you the data Everything now talks to everything and with machines talking to machines and the human encounter with the non human all things become massively addressable and possibly massively conversational. In our age of the anthropocene we must learn these new modes of dialogue and commence conversation.

If there is one thing we are suppose to know, it is ourselves but perhaps all we can know is the limit of ourselves

What lives in my blood. In Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep, humans enhance the drudgery of their noxious worlds by dialing into a device called the "Penfield Mood Organ." They have reached the point where they can't experience their own emotions without the aid of an interface. When Deckard's wife awakes in the morning, she feels nothing whatsoever but she has a vague sense of depression, so she punches a number into the mood organ like a jukebox, and the "organ" channels the emotion into her.

Hungry ghosts succubi come on and take possession.

'the algorithms are at it again'

A fabric 'riddled with holes': 'All you had to do was pick one and slip through it if, like Alice, you wanted to get to the other side of the looking glass.'

Data scientist through glass writing algorithms and on other side man with cybernetic arms and above them a beautiful sky, clouds, clouds just clouds that 'live for themselves'.

Two beautiful people in love, and one has to kill the other out of mercy.

A MoonAge Daydream, I'm an alligator, I'm a mama papa coming to you.

My vehicles, across space time and death and the future.

'The idea of beauty can take curious shapes.'

Exile Diaspora (moving back and forth in time. So anecdotes from 300 years ago.) Abulafia fleeing Rome.

I am a program. An AI reading me, my texts, my library.

Robert, the photographer, photographing everything and the woman data scientist walking analyzing all these screens Marc's set design indexing the world

Slide shows of images, atlas, Mnemosyne, montage, shock.

Love and high society, fashion portraits paintings slide show from garment, brown to sky color brown to brown as objective science, data women scientist with slide projectors. All that can be touched, all that can be seen.

The Geoengineer, the earth is our vehicle, the disappearance of Man at the end of History.

The new flesh, fugue-state, back to mood organ, at this point we begin to see sense that there are different platforms different narrators for this work.

In Race and History he laid waste to the West's myth of progress, arguing that its narrative of evolution from primitive to civilised society was simply a form of 'ethnocentrism'.

Scholar of Sodomy, on Borges, Bolaño, Naipaul and buggering this is the same couple / woman drawing man.

Woman as the first pack mule, (it's obvious we do have a penis, so you can not bugger and to bugger is to burglar, it's exercise force, a violence onto someone, to exert power). Samurai, mounted rider on horse with bow and arrow now puppeteer uses strings then robot remote maxheadroom. Then ai warfare.

Fireball and the great destruction of everything like opening of Mahabharata

The Congruence of Birds and the Future of Illusion. Sleeping and Dreaming The new world Levi Strauss from the doldrums

A autobiography of sorts, Roman Catholic Jew Me, my love, my family he is in analysis, she is analyzing him.

Why socrates's reason defeated honor, mode of honor, reason made the world an object to conquer and possess.

Photographer taking pictures. She he they are always interchanging has a camera looking into a rear screen as if she is taking pictures of the photographs we are seeing

Cronenberg, video, tuning into stations from buffalo ny - underground

James Baldwin, my mother, a gathering in london, show video.

Lautreamont, Breton, Burroughs, the liberators of words.

A way in the world, bound to violence, african sense of the absurd.

Bound to Violence has four parts. The first is a compressed history of the first several hundred years of the Nakem Empire, starting around the year 1200. It is a brutal, violent, oppressive, corrupt country. Slavery is widespread: "a hundred million of the damned -- so moan the troubadours of Nakem when the evening vomits forth its starry diamonds -- were carried away." There's even cannibalism: "one of the darkest features of that spectral Africa over which hung the malefic shadow of Saif al-Haram."

The Arabs had conquered the land (settling over it "like a she-dog baring her white fangs in raucous laughter"), and the common (black) man -- the négraille, as Ouologuem calls it, translated

here as "niggertrash" -- suffers for it. Religion -- Islam -- is abused in order to consolidate and keep power. It "became a means of action, a political weapon."

The brief second part sees the coming of the Whites at the close of the 19th century. The empire is "pacified" and divided up by the Europeans, with the French controlling what remains of Nakem. There is the hope that life will improve: Saved from slavery, the niggertrash welcomed the white man with joy, hoping he would make them forget the mighty Saif's meticulously organized cruelty.

Colonel Borges on the pampas an imperialist according to Naipaul <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/1972/10/19/comprehending-borges/>

Claude Lévi-Strauss reserved his sharpest criticisms for Sartre's Hegelian vision of history, which he described as a fairy tale about human agency, 'the last refuge of a transcendental humanism'. The goal of human science, he argued, 'is not to constitute, but to dissolve man'.

The Savage Mind discusses not just "primitive" thought, a category defined by previous anthropologists, but also forms of thought common to all human beings. The first half of the book lays out Lévi-Strauss's theory of culture and mind, while the second half expands this account into a theory of history and social change. This latter part of the book engaged Lévi-Strauss in a heated debate with Jean-Paul Sartre over the nature of human freedom. On the one hand, Sartre's existentialist philosophy committed him to a position that human beings fundamentally were free to act as they pleased. On the other hand, Sartre also was a leftist who was committed to ideas such as that individuals were constrained by the ideologies imposed on them by the powerful. Lévi-Strauss presented his structuralist notion of agency in opposition to Sartre.

Sartre, exposed as a man of the 19th century, never replied. The existentialist era had ended; the structuralist era had begun.

The ideal of human liberation. Brave new world Houellebecq.

Writing composing with Ai

The future is a much better guide to the present than the past.

The mayday signal of Black Atlantic Futurism is unrecognizability, as either Black or Music. Sonic Futurism doesn't locate you in tradition; instead it dislocates you from origins. It uproots you by inducing a Gulf crisis, a perceptual daze rendering today's sonic discontinuum immediately audible.

Visual Threads | Modules

At Sea

Enter the Image as your Vehicle

My body, a brown paper bag

Franny, the way of the pilgrim

Robert M, the ways of love and high society

Roman Catholic Jew Me, my love, my family



Enter the Image as your Vehicle

Vahana means that which carries or bears. It is derived from the word vaha means bearing, carrying. It is also a reference to a stream or a flow. Hence, a river is known as Vahini, that which carries. In Hinduism, Vahanas have a great significance as the Vehicles of gods and goddesses. Each Hindu deity has a Vahana which is usually an animal, bird, or a mythical creature. In the following discussion, we





and i thought of Nijnsky, the faun who had fallen away from the spell of Diaghilev, and those that fell away from the spell of analysis who went lateral, schizo.



whitman contained multitudes, and Nietzsche and Nijnsky?

i am becoming multiple. I am becoming an hallucination to myself. I am a scanner darkly.

once power became abstract, becomes symbol and ritual and once reason becomes software the whole of us can go mad and let the artificial intelligence run the place.

why, for example, do we continue to speak of the sun's "rising" and "setting", when strictly speaking the sun does not move at all? As Wittgenstein puts it, "a whole mythology is deposited in our language".




Two-part mobile enclosure synthesized mechanical and biological systems. It was to provide a cybernetic environment designed to anticipate the nutritional, metabolic, and affective needs of the dwelling person, lending them sustainable autonomy in the face of increasing physical and communicative demands in a near future of (post)humanity.

The narcissistic monadism of such self-containment (or, arguably, containment of the self) made Lakofski think of “the addict with his paper bag,” an association she elaborates upon almost twenty years later in another essay.

*Then one day, one corner-sitting veteran cleverly dropped the bottle or can of beer into a crumpled brown bag. It was genius. As David Simon (creator of *The Wire*) wrote: “There, on the corners of the poorest neighborhoods, dozens of men would live their lives at the lip of a bottle of 20/20 or T-Bird or Mickey’s, public consumption law or no,” but that wrinkled, decrepit brown bag became a “staple of ghetto diplomacy.

e-flux architecture

“the use of cyborg clocking into homeostatic systems” and addressed the whole gamut of life- and performance-enhancing technologies imaginable in 1968 that were capable of propelling humans into a posthuman process of coming “into our own again as anything at all.”



The Cushicle consisted “of a chassis with appliances and personalized apparatuses and an inflatable envelope. The chassis is structured like a spine and would include a heating system. The bednet would contain the radio and mini-TV. Food and water modules could be added to the chassis as attachments. The two skins would be envelopes for the rider, covered with viewing screens. The two could be used independently or simultaneously.”

[Go to Text](#)

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15 16 17 18 19 20 21

[See All](#)

Related

Conversations

Notes

Share

With the “Soul Box,” Lakofski reflects particularly on “people who have managed to make themselves into containers of their own souls.”

The Artist Asks What the Self Might Be

*and how various notions of the self afford and open possibilities
In this line of biography and politics I find it difficult in
figuring myself.*

*In various study groups I have found very quickly I can not
articulate a position for myself outside of ‘privilege’. I can,
and I hear this notion of privilege, and have a good sense of what
it means, perhaps not a living sense of what it means because I
can not know figure myself as ‘oppressed’ or ‘marginal’ but of
course I am, as is everyone, but then again, not. Perhaps at times
AbuLaflia could, being someone inside and outside at the same time.*

What do i have to say on my behalf?

I must write myself against something, but what againstness could have any effect and be anything but resentment, reproachment.

The drive is towards unhooking from who you are while simultaneously becoming only yourself. Some people can sleep with their eyes open. What does this process of constantly discovering yourself actually do? Is it a push for recognition? It creates exceptional individuals of globalization—"an aristocracy of labor," as Shuddhabrata Sengupta put it.

I want to use the strategies of the artist, museum and material culture for the purposes of opening up my history, memory, being, time and conflict. The artist is always in defiance, standing against. If they pretend not to know this, then what can they possibly be doing.

I must write myself from multiple perspectives, I am multiple.

-I am everyone

-Being no one

-being somewhere

-being everywhere

-I am no one

-No one

-Everything connected to everything

-When everything talks to everything

-Everything connects everything

It will be a story about a system of note taking, in pictures

It would be a story about his mother and father and their parents and their parents

It would be a story about pictures about the different shades of colors in the pictures

Nothing else nothing would be recognizable but an infinite shading of colors

It would be a story about this picture that a friend had sent her. he would look at other pictures, pictures like that picture and more pictures and with this he would have a picture of the world.

There was no story, just this picture

It would be a story about a map, a map that would allow him to escape, not escape exactly but to find himself elsewhere.

The pictures would be a place to go

It will be a story about patterns and effects, interactions of colors and what colors had more resonance in one time and place rather than another.

It will be a story of photographs, a story of arranging photographs, an analysis of quanta of data sets by an array of off the self industrialized algorithms.

It will be a story of my collection of photographs, day to day. Each day, like in permutations, a new note entry will be used to gather images.

There is a leak in your identity. We are all leaking.

Leaking into one another being porous being wet, after all we are wetware. Maybe – maybe we are not simply in the water but of the water, of the stars, a meshwork of many things, geological biological historical yet when we insist of history as human history we lose all sense of being planetary beings, beings of the stars.

Realism

class room

Doctor Solange Schlosser in her seminar room. It's clear the kids dig her.

Dr. Schlosser paces about the room.

solange

To describe reality you do not have to write realism, because realism is only one rule about reality: there are lots of others.

student

Is realism a rule about reality and not reality itself – is that what we are saying? A convention formed to describe a reality

student

One of the lessons of the twentieth century, it seems to me, is that human beings are not discrete from each other.

student

To me people are leaking into each other like flavors when you cook. There are all kinds of leakages, one bit of story leaks into other stories.

educated in the West, and Kafka, wrote of the sensitive and perennial outsider, alienated everywhere by the 'rabble-men' who bear 'an expression of greed on their faces, in pursuit of money and sexual satisfaction'.

Al-e-Ahmad's depiction of slums, like McEwan's dystopian vision of the English countryside, had a broader significance for the 'human project'. As he wrote on the last page of *Westoxification*:

And now I, not as an Easterner, but as one like the first Muslims, who expected to see the Resurrection on the Plain of Judgment in their lifetimes, see that Albert Camus, Eugene Ionesco, Ingmar Bergman, and many other artists,

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LOSING MY RELIGION

all of them from the West, are proclaiming this *same* resurrection. All regard the end of human affairs with despair. Sartre's Erostratus fires a revolver at the people in the street blindfolded; Nabokov's protagonist drives his car into the crowd; and the stranger, Meursault, kills someone in reaction to a bad case of sunburn. These fictional endings all represent where humanity is ending up in reality, a humanity that, if it does not care to be crushed under the machine, must go about in a rhinoceros's skin.

Biography as Recording Event

The film *27* was a documentary, fiction, biography, portraiture, enactment, performance and social sculpture following the interwoven lives of 7 people from ages 13 to 54 creating a joyous and complex portrait of an artist, a group of actors and a filmmaker all who share desires to be free, to love, and to be loved.

The film continued an investigation, a cinema of becoming, putting forward new approaches to recording, biography, authorship and narrative structure delivering a cinema where all things touch in dreams, in algorithms, in a kiss mapped into any number of vectors and correlations. *27* is a geography of love, death, ambition, euphoria, effusion and desire.



27 biography staged as fiction



Biography as Geography

art as latitudes

-geographies

-transport

-spices and exploits

-installation room / zhenzhen tropic of cancer

If there is a tree in the country, I don't bring it into my laboratory to look at it under my microscope, because I think the wind which blows through its leaves is absolutely necessary for the knowledge of the tree and cannot be separated from it. Also the birds which are in the branches, and even the song of these birds. My turn of mind is to join always more things surrounding the tree, and further, always more of the things which surround the things which surround the tree.

(Jean Dubuffet)

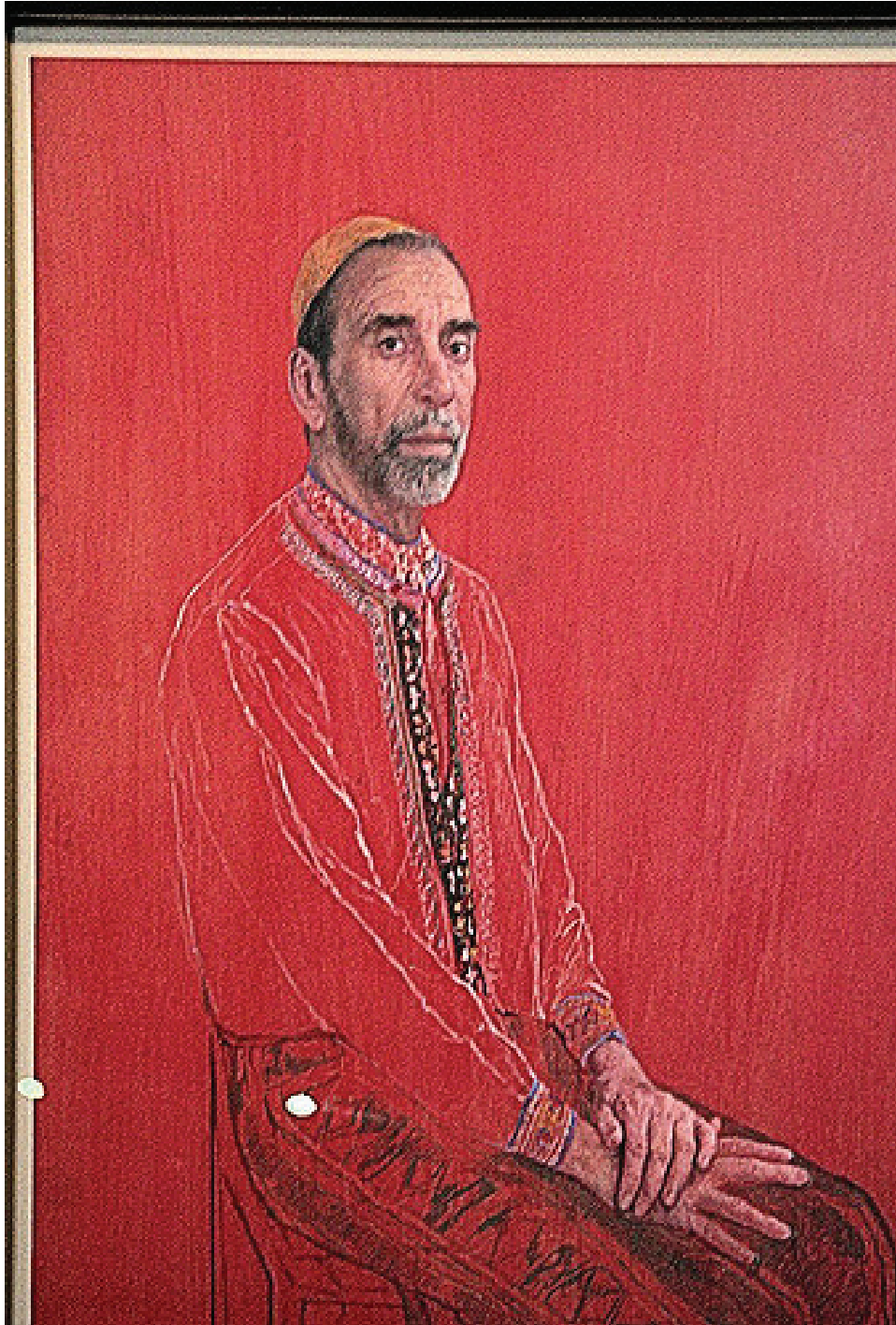




Blackboards and a Twitter wall surround the large room as we did in the Minsheng, creating a installation environment for people to engage each other.

But as Shenzhen is situated about a degree south of the Tropic of Cancer, I am thinking of doing something with piles of salt and Pearl River clumps of dirt and and placing in them signs like you see attached following the Tropic of Cancer – across the globe, a constellation of objects. Interspersed lounge chairs made for international consumption in the factories of the area will be placed. Together this space reads Shenzhen both as a material historical earthly place and networked place constructed within an art economy.

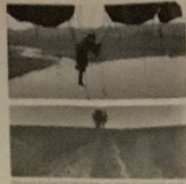
*A portrait of Samuel Abulafia from around 1370.
It hangs in a synagogue in Toledo he had built.*



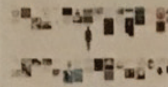
**Arranging re-arranging my “self”
through pictures, through recording.
A working biography.**







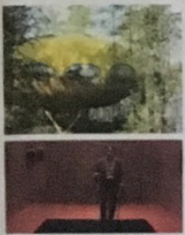
Two black and white photographs of a person walking on a path, one from above and one from below.



Two black and white photographs of a person walking on a path, one from above and one from below.



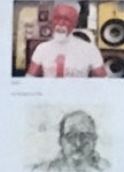
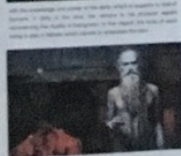
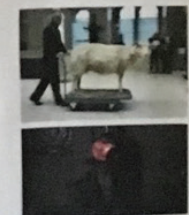
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Two black and white photographs of a person walking on a path, one from above and one from below.



Two black and white photographs of a person walking on a path, one from above and one from below.



Biography as Multiple

So I will make a film. I will have five directors make a film with me, of me, about me. While they interview me I will make a film of them.



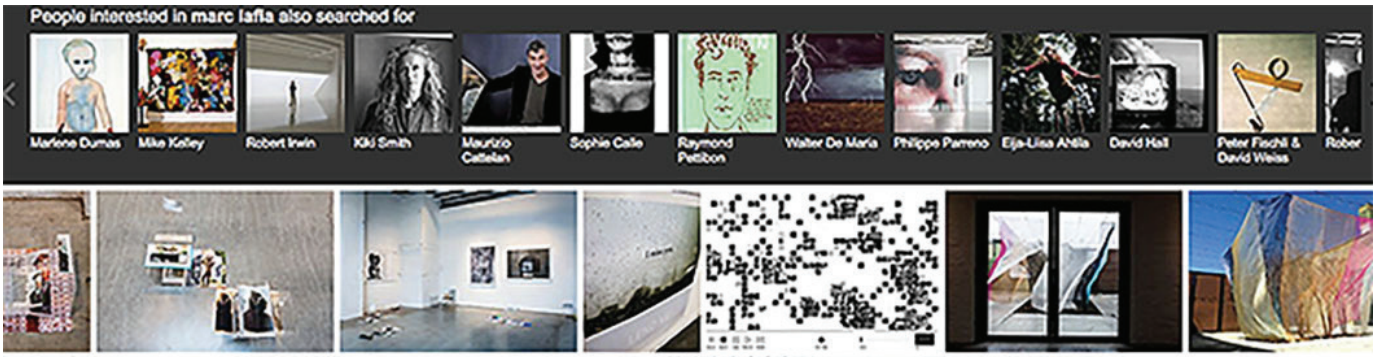
MARC LAFIA

BROOKLYN, NEW YORK

Marc Lafia is an artist, filmmaker, and essayist who lives in Brooklyn, New York, and most recently exhibited at the Shenzhen Sculpture Biennale 2014.

My passion is deeply sensing and imaging what we're all doing here, how things work, and how I (and the not-I of me) fold into the fabric of everything. In my art and films, I ask how we come to know the things we know and how the way we come to know things limits what we know and do. I enjoy pressing up to that limit.

MARCLAFIA.COM
PHOTO: SIMONE ALEXANDER





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Search

You Are Here; or, What to Do with All These Pictures

How does the camera, the instrument I am typing into, create a world for us to be in? Not a world view, as in a world of contested representations, but a peculiar, perceptual world ordered by unique and open instructions, algorithms that belie themselves and offer a sense, at times, other than what was intended, at least for us, the readers of such arrays of pictures. If we think of image search as a camera, giving us pictures, pictures displayed as a rational ordering, image as information, is there something we might want to observe in those pictures that stray from order, that at first we dismiss and consider inexact? Is there something if not odd and strange presented as and in the guise of information? Is there something here that is a wedding and becoming of man and machine that is contestable, playful, mysterious, complicated and poetic? Can we consider Search as photographer, that transpersonal space, the inhuman-becoming of the human, the network and its algorithms as image makers *and* image consumers: an image metabolism?

IMAGE
PHOTOGRAPH

An Essay

Photography as an
image, photography
as the recording
of an encounter,
a recording of an
apparatus — the
aesthetic of the
image is the image
that reads and
performs imaging.

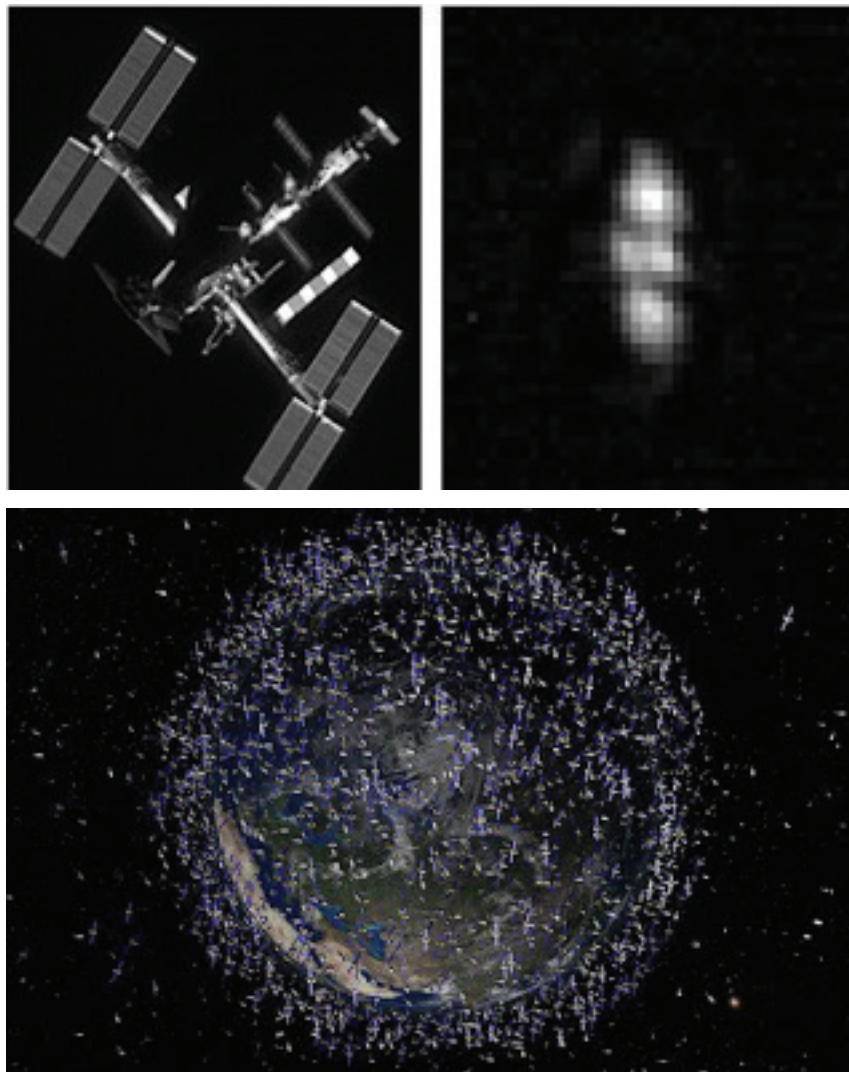
17



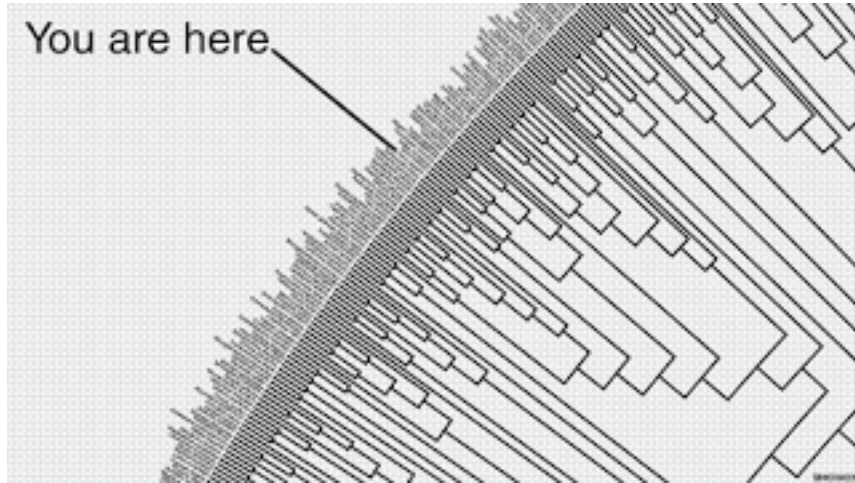
When pictures, writing, sound and movement come together as motion pictures, adding the immersion of experiential space, we become wrapped inside a world that replaces the world. Cities like Songdo and Eko Atlantic, new nervous systems of data, may be harbingers of an earth, as McLuhan said, increasingly becoming an artwork, programmed and designed, dialed in, dialed up and dialed down, all the while not quite being right.

We do this by making pictures. Picture taking like writing allowed us to command the world by making a double of it. You can read this in the writings of Baudrillard.

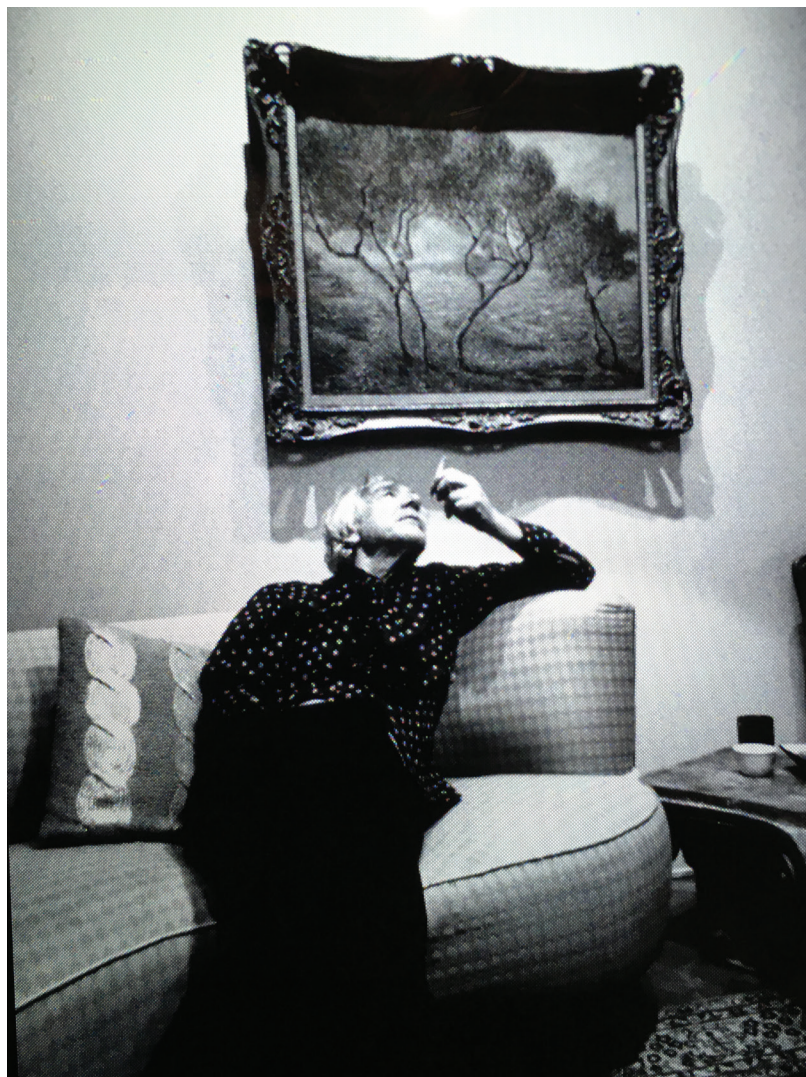
The photograph, in becoming an image, becoming digital, has the photograph disappear and become an image photograph. That's the starting point of my book, to see photography. To picture it, to make an image of photography, to photograph it.

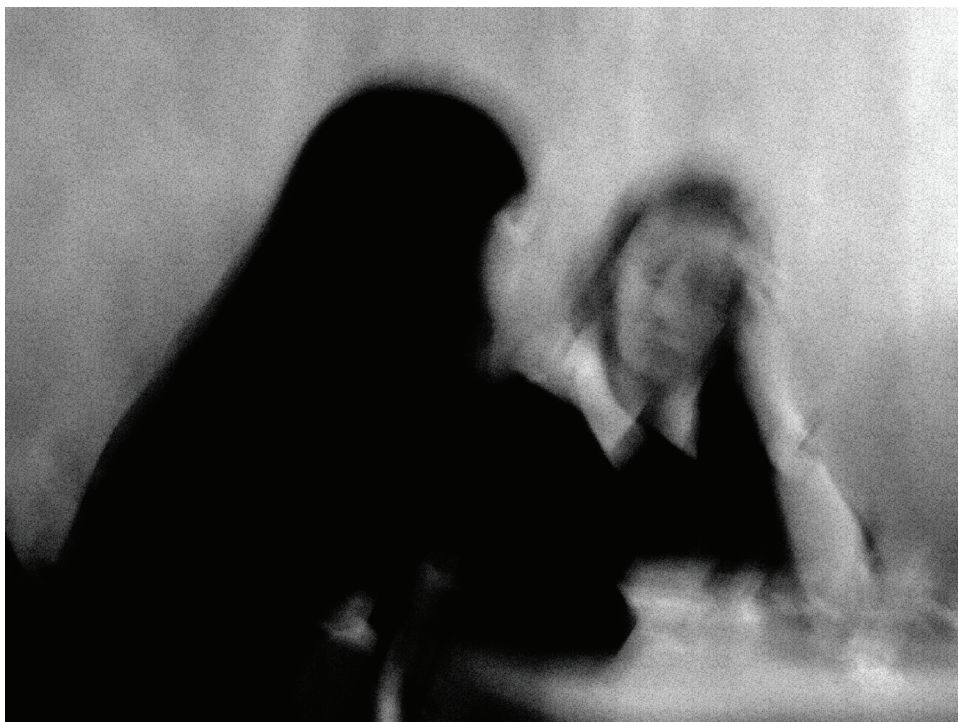


I wanted to see how photography might locate me.



And dislocate me.





The strange and beautiful thing about photography is that it gave us this sense of seeing the world. It was this instrument that pictured the phenomena of the world, a world we recognized as ours. We took its appearance for the world.

Not that the Lascaux caves are not an image of the world that those that lived 17,000 years ago thought was other than the world they were seeing and perceiving. Perhaps we can think of our network as the Lascaux caves—not in some distant future looking back at it, but in looking at it today. Maybe with the sense of awe, the mystery and bewilderment, the strangeness and magnificence we have for these caves and their many drawings, we could look on upon our network now. Of course, we are doing quite the opposite with big data and our data analytics; we want this enormous instrument to be domesticated, we want it tamed and we want to master it, and with it and computation, we want to master our world.

Lately, I've been thinking about the network as this vast space and there's these spaces and images there I just don't know how to read. So, I wonder how to see them. I've come to let go of trying to understand them and to think of them as kind of hieroglyphs in the sense of a language I can not read but that might suggest things to me other than their intent.

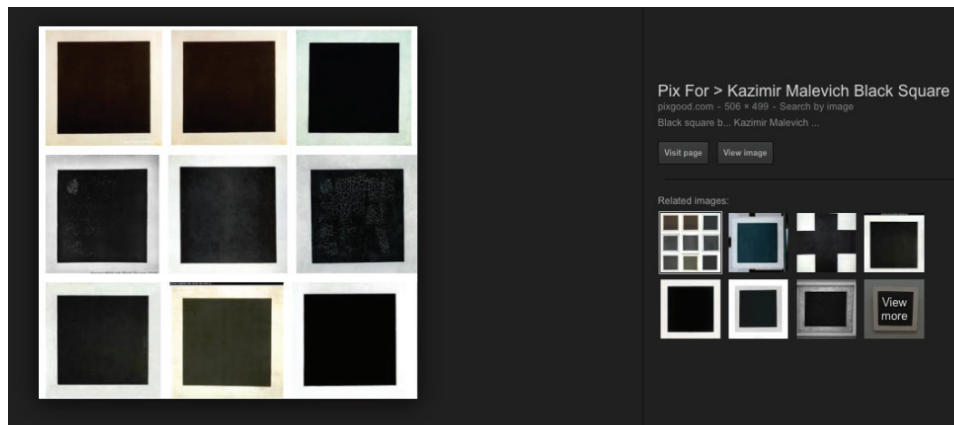
Consider this quote by the Czech composer Leoš Janáček:

When anyone speaks to me, I listen more to the tonal modulations in his voice than to what he is actually saying. From this, I know at once what he is like, what he feels, whether he is lying, whether he is agitated or whether he is merely making conventional conversation. I can even feel, or rather hear, any hidden sorrow. Life is sound, the tonal modulations of the human speech ... I have a vast collection

of notebooks filled with [the “melodic curves of speech”]—you see, they are my window through which I look into the soul.

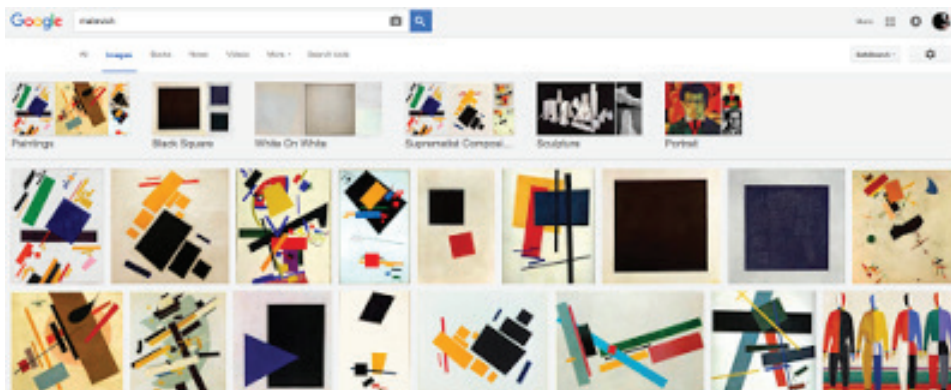
I’ve been thinking about Google image search-results and search as a camera creating pictures. And with that the narrative that confers authenticity to photographs, that makes them legible instead of being hieroglyphs. But, before we finish, I want to invite you to see them in the way that the composer Janacek hears people speaking. I want you to listen to them with your eyes as a way to time travel.

But, before we ask what the algorithm is that brings them together, let’s look at the ordering of pictures in the results, how they are frame, how they are pictures. The ordering of information is in itself a sense. I like the Malevich results, black on black on black in black. It doubles for me the absolutely reductive sense of the black paintings themselves.



The Malevich query returns to us a quite straightforward result.

I type in *Malevich*, or *black paintings*, and by search indexing the text surrounding any image a match will be made with the given query. If the query matches, the corresponding linked image is retrieved. Once a set of images appear, we can select one and begin to search and find related images. The image you’ve selected is used to find similar images.



An image algorithm works by looking or detecting in images their deformations, their scale, rotation, illumination, visual similarity, color value and, in Google's case, by ranking.

In addition to linking text surrounding an image to that image, we can link all visually similar images to that image with the same text.

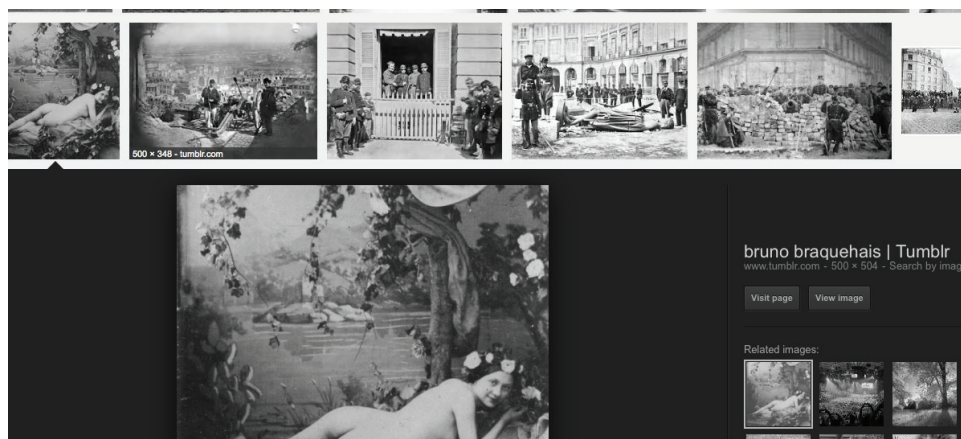
There is no perfect algorithm, so the return depends mainly on the application and what kind of trade-offs the application can tolerate. And that's where things can get interesting.

The best an algorithm can do is amalgamate. It takes discrete things, assumes certain relationships between them, then streams them together to look for 'like' things. But you, a person, are a continuous state of becoming. Your taste, your metabolism, is not made of discrete things or moments. It is a becoming. An algorithm is premised on arithmetic: *this + this + that*. You are a calculus, a trajectory, a duration made up of many infinitesimal changes.

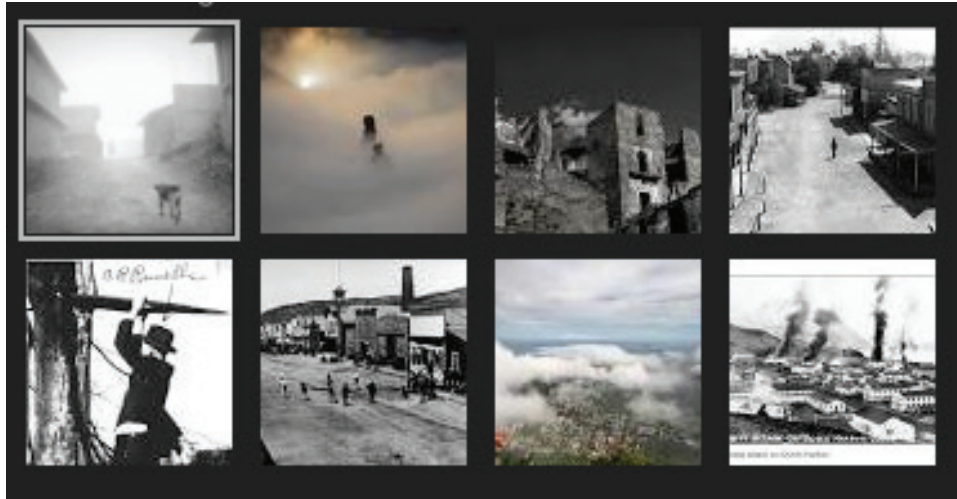
It's these abrupt changes and the gaps between them that make search results at times most interesting. Certain search queries take on narratives of their own, narratives that were not made or curated from authors, image by image, but by this logic of the applied algorithms.

The results of this logic can lead readers to sensing a kind of surrealism or plain nonsense or kinds of cut ups, giving us things poignant, ironic, sad, beautiful and much much more than what was bargained for in the query. Like an oracle, or augury or the *I Ching*, procedural rules have a kind of indifference. In the case of these algorithms, by not seeing the pictures, not understanding their semantic and cultural sense, things come together that ordinarily would not. And this can be quite perplexing, confounding, even annoying, but can also be viewed as quite liberating, and as a new kind of poetics.

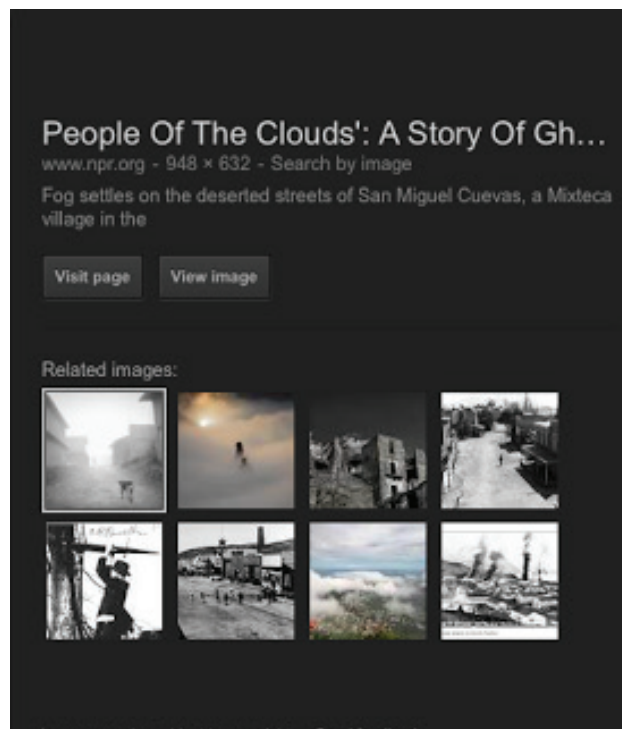
Search is a camera assembling for us very new composite pictures. Permutations of another order, a topology of assemblages, which for me I see now akin to my earlier series *Permutations*:



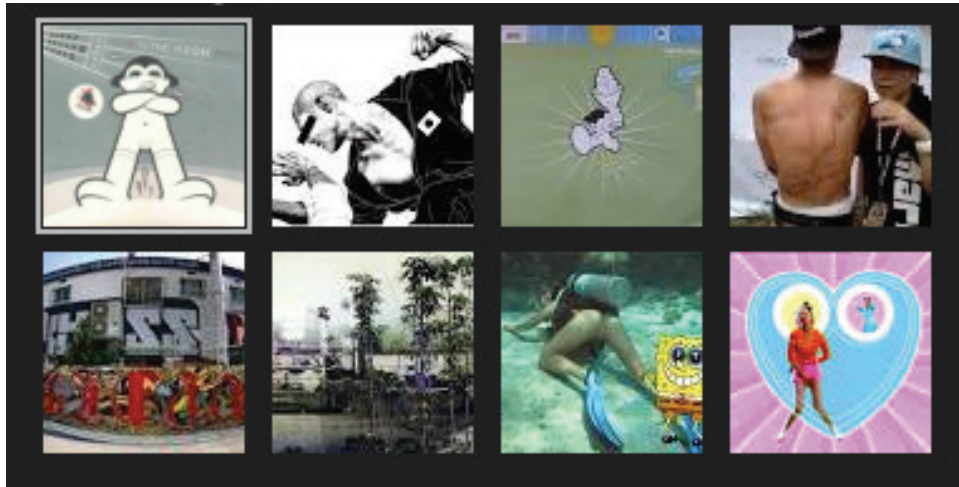
Here, in this set of images, is a narrative, poetry, presented free of the words that tell you what you have looked for. These pictures only need the attribution of a subject, a position, to be narrated, to come alive. But without attribution, we must name them and narrate them ourselves, even quietly, without words but in seeing them. What I find fascinating is that (I am pretty certain) we look past this surrealism, this aggregate, on our way to find what we want. But most likely, there is something here, as it is, that's perfect. Perfect, in the sense that it is, as such.



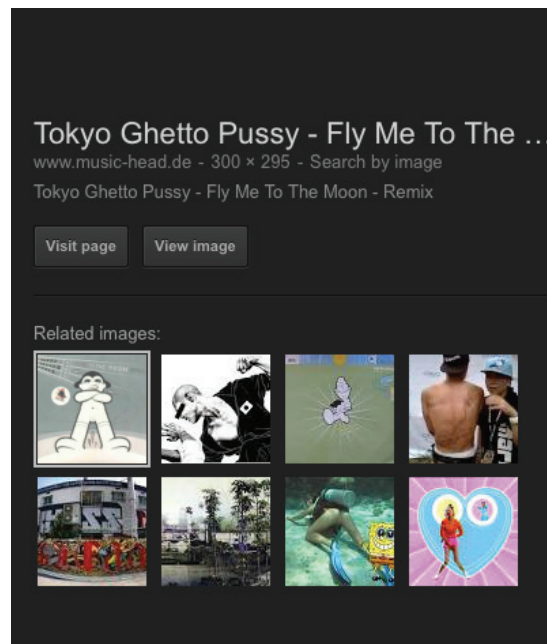
Now, the same images with the title line. Locating these images.

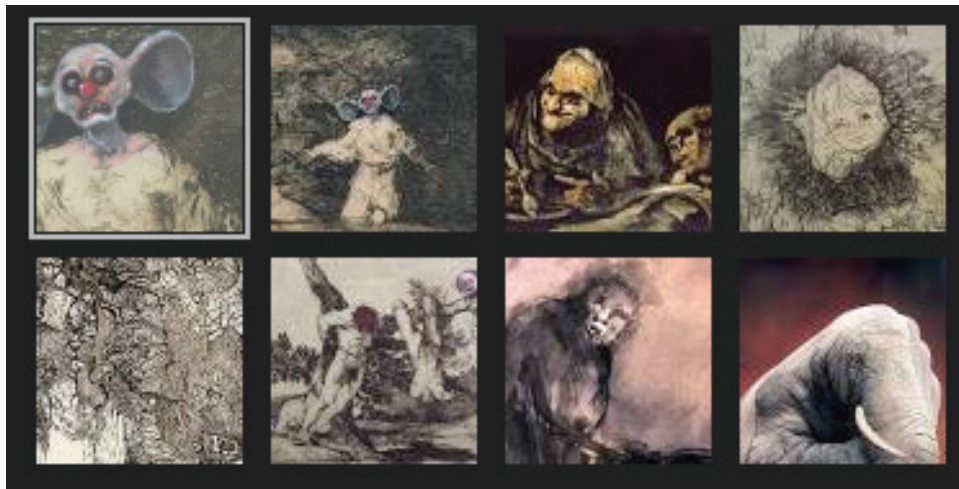


Here, another set.



In his book *The Future of the Image*, Jacques Rancière talks about the Aesthetic Regime, a regime of image operations, one of which includes the decoupling of the image from narrative. It was the regime of Representation when narrative lead the image, inducing it – but in the aesthetic regime images just are.





Don't worry if art makes you laugh. It s...

www.theguardian.com - 460 x 276 - Search by image

The Chapman brothers add another layer to a Goya print. AP/Alastair Grant

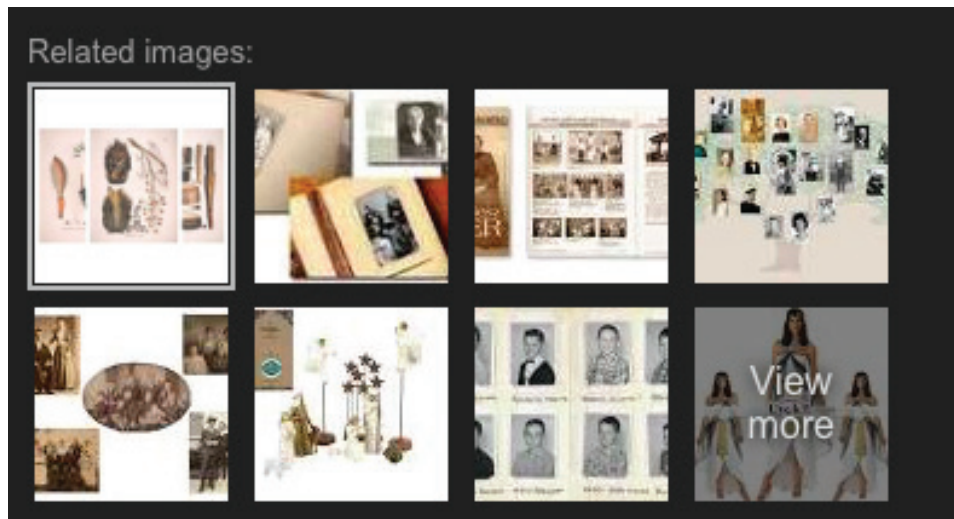
Visit page

View image

Related images:



Instead of looking for the picture that we want and looking past or discounting the set of pictures we receive, perhaps we're missing something, something very interesting. Perhaps the inexactness of these results has something to tell us.

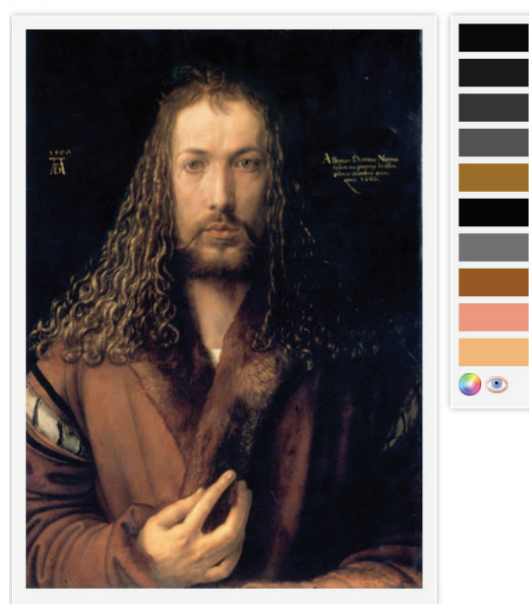


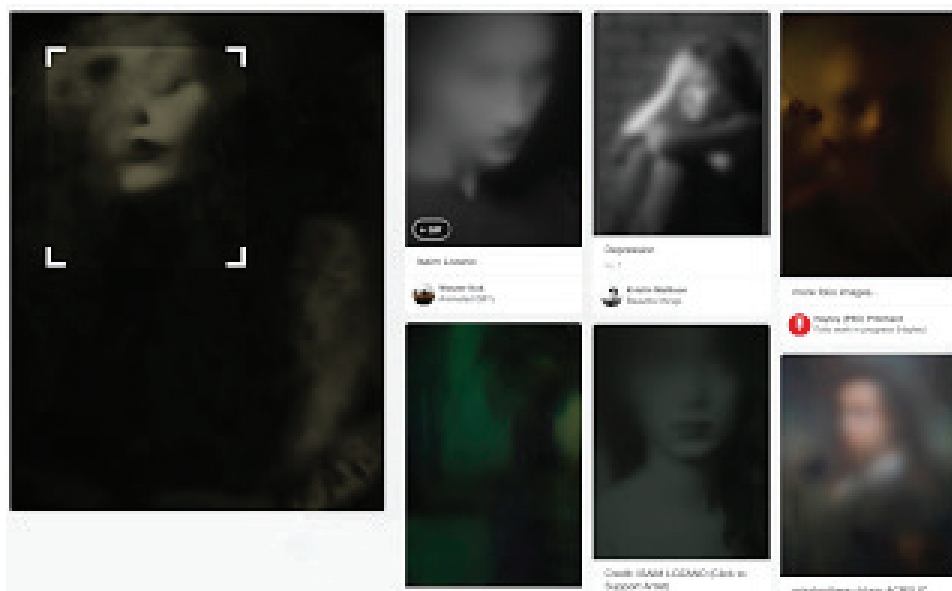
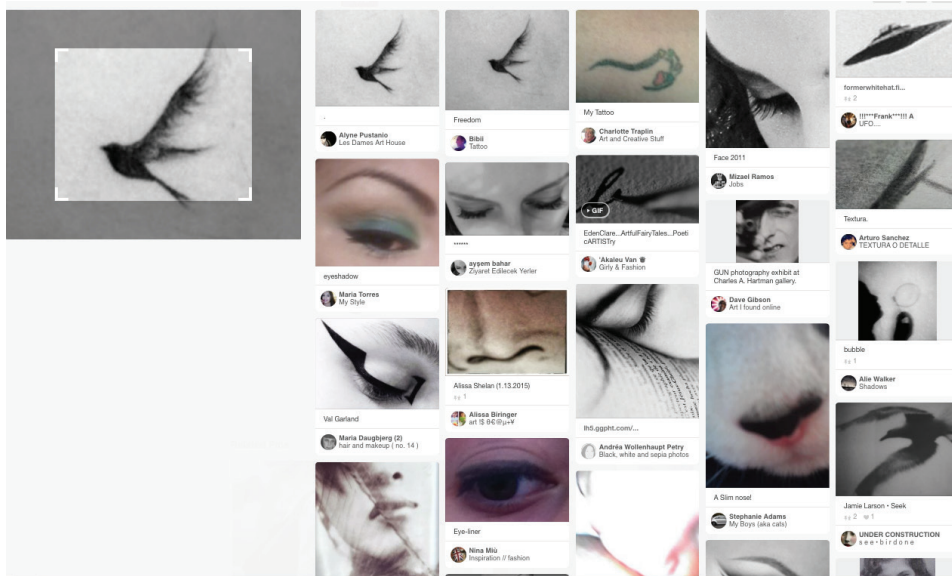
Each is a curation, a miniature archive, a kind of virtual Joseph Cornell box of 8 images, a cabinet of curiosity.

Let's not be mistaken that the form of its presentation, its very format, gives it a sense, manages the dream. Most immediately, we see each image equivalent in size, often color and just something.

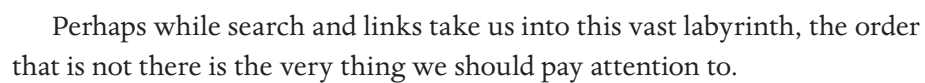
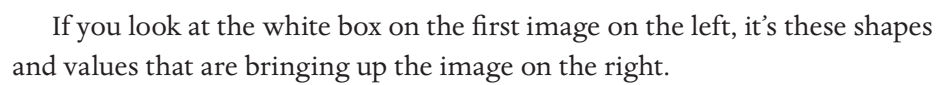
Of course, that something is one of hundreds of algorithms, the instructions launched by your search.

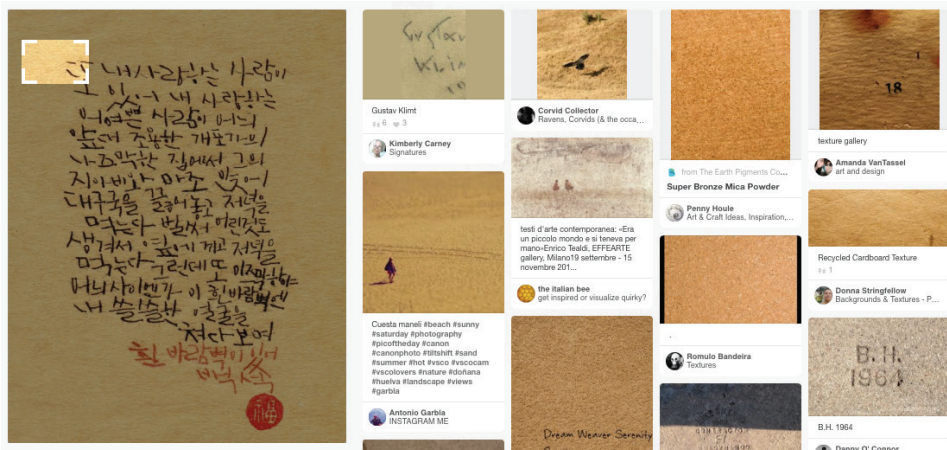
I like this as a photograph. A visual algorithm.





Now, the image collection below is curated by a person, and the one above by an algorithm.



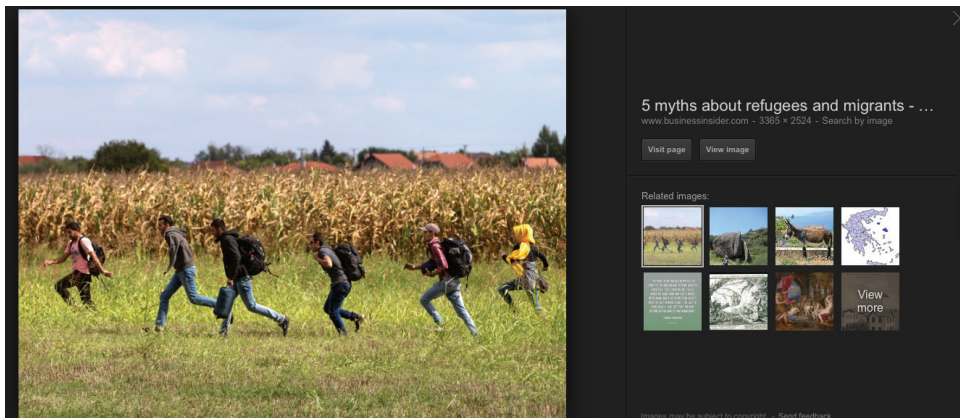
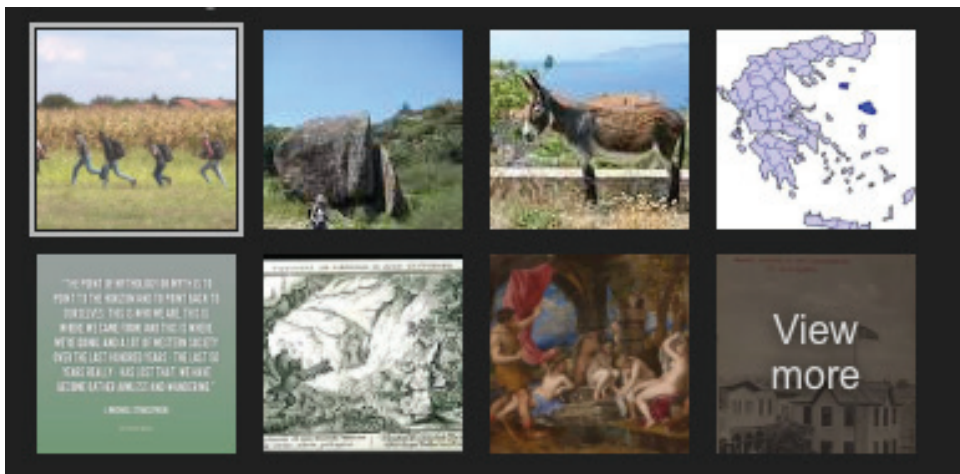


Not only are our algorithms telling us new stories—so do our visual tools.



Photography as visualization, I considered in my book, *Image Photograph*. A photography that includes a number of complex readings, re-visualisations, machine seeing, algorithms, appropriations, re-photography, software formats, original photography, search, large data sets and so on.





We might say that each text, each search places an image in a narrative, in a micro history. But how does history get imaged and written? We might say that each image search result shown in the context of an array of images, sometimes in its delay in appearing, creating a kind of amnesia, or even an aporia, proffers an uncanny, of an image in an unsuspecting narrative, the needle in the haystack, the one we weren't looking for.

It is the function of the artist to evoke the experience of surprised recognition: to show the viewer what he knows but does not know that he knows. William Burroughs

The Transformations of Peter Foldes 2012 69" x 92 C-print



So, why play with pictures?

I want to find the ground (or maybe the better metaphor is flight) between the temporality of technologies as material orderings of movement and the temporal flows of my subjective experience. Flows that seem more and more to be ordered by me entering myself into this machine, but through which I want to write a way out.

In the political economy of the senses, we become samples, data, markets, “banks”, geographies of sensation and perception, the city, the world as interface and the rehearsal is here in search and the visual tools of ‘seeing’, formatting, big data, analytics.* In *Image/Search* ML furthers his proposition of the network as camera treating and presenting ‘search’ as an uncanny photographer.

These new prints include a number of complex readings and operations turning on revisualizations, machine seeing, algorithms, appropriations, original and re-photography, software formats, large data sets and the slippery and complex narratives he puts forward in their pictures. In “search” the very indifference of an algorithmic query to what is in the image, can, seen through a certain angle, exceed its rationality, and be, he argues, poetic and offer us a new imaginary.

In these pictures he creates an image in the mesh between algorithmic and human subjectivity, a difference he says is like that between arithmetic and calculus, between the discrete and the continuous, in the middle of man and his instruments, in the middle of many possible realities, a transpersonal space, of the inhuman-becoming of the human.

Edit | Delete

I have invented so many false memories, which were collective memories, that my true childhood has disappeared

Posted September 17, 2007, 20:34 - Marc

Roland Barthes was born in the first year of World War I (26 October 1915), Christian Boltanski in the last year of World War II, specifically, on the day of the liberation of Paris (6 September 1944)--hence his middle name Liberté. Barthes's Catholic father was killed in October 1916 in a naval battle in the North Sea; the fatherless child was brought up in Bayonne by his mother and maternal grandmother in an atmosphere he has described as one of genteel poverty and narrow Protestant bourgeois rectitude. Boltanski's father, a prominent doctor, was born a Jew but converted to Catholicism; his wife, a writer was Catholic. To avoid deportation in 1940, the Boltanskis faked a divorce and pretended the doctor had fled, abandoning his family, whereas in reality he was hidden in the basement of the family home, situated in the center of Paris, for the duration of the Occupation. The death of Barthes's father, an event his son understood early on as being only too "real," may thus be contrasted to the simulated "death" of Dr. Boltanski at the time of his son's birth. Indeed, this sort of simulation, not yet a central issue in World War I when battle-lines were drawn on nationalistic rather than ideological grounds, became important in the time of the Resistance, when simulation and appropriation became common means of survival. Georges Perec, for example, a writer Boltanski greatly admires and frequently cites, was miraculously saved from the concentration camp in which his parents perished by being sent to the South of France on a Red Cross transport, his arm having been put in a sling as if he had been wounded. He was five years old.

Majorie Perloff <http://epc.buffalo.edu/authors/perloff/boltanski.html>

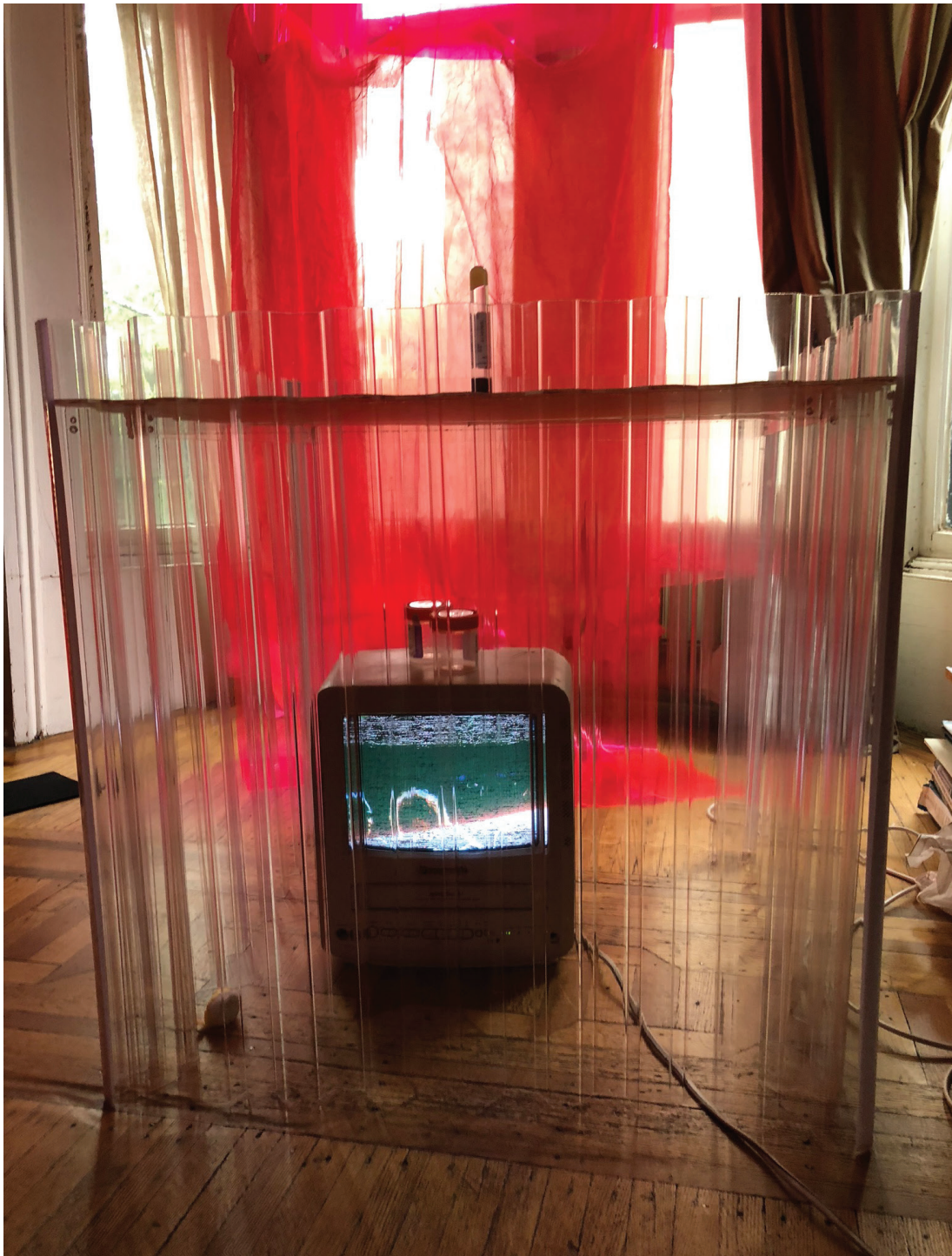


31

Display,
Tableaux,
Object-Scene

Everything is machines, machines connected to other machines.

It's not the object, but its display. Displays confer objects with meanings. In this work, I want to put on display as an object of art, as an object-scene. I want to display display, to see it as a tableaux, a wreckage, a crime site in the midst of an investigation.



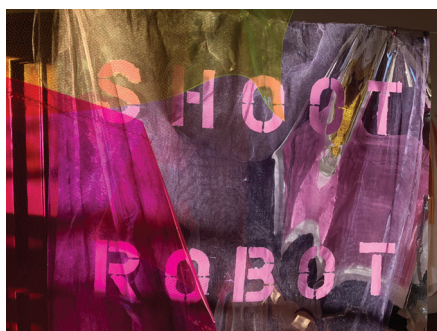
Object-Scene 1 2018



Our bodies, cities and spaces, and all things in them, are increasingly entangled and tethered to ambient sensors, RFID tags, QR codes, algorithmic routines, iterative databases, machine- and natural language processors, where each and every thing, every atom, every universe becomes locatable and addressable, an increasingly vast network of communication, tracking, monitoring and surveillance swarms about us. What is the image of this swarm, this new networked body, the image of everything on the planet, inventoried, every rock in the grand canyon, every snow crystal, every coral plant, every microbe, every traffic light and the face of every person crossing every traffic light on the planet? It will not be long before the smart phone in our hands will be in our heads, and the interface to all things, even the motility of things, will occur by simply thinking, a new augmented and amplified thinking, a human machine thinking.

If the age of reason ushered in the idea of the discrete and inviolable, of things clearly delineated, of neat borders and empires, of things here and things there, of me, c'est moi, me, the individual, an insoluble person, entire to myself, the age of all-things-networked disperses this once whole and discrete thing, this individual, this will, striving, flow, desire, production into so many machines.

Our common notion of machines is first that they are asubjective and unnatural, that they are distinct from human subjects and from nature. But this is precisely what we find under attack by philosophers Deleuze and Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus*. That is, that the human, the machinic, and the natural are all one. The self and the non-self, outside and inside, no longer have any meaning whatsoever. There is no original point that starts the production process; all production and machines are a result of other productions, other machines. Being is not a fixed thing but a continually modulating process.



That's the image and sense of *Shoot Robot*, that all things bleed into each other, contaminate each other, desire each other, simultaneously in love and dismembered by each other, both materially and narratively, informationally and materially. If in *Making Sense* I wanted to present the tactility of things in the guise and shape of art, works as discrete, here the sensorium splices into the body, plastic collides with metal with mannequins, and quarantined blood samples, diseased servers with diseased servants, things are ripped, tubed and taped, all things imbricated into each other.

In 1984, Donna Haraway wrote *A Cyborg Manifesto*. In it, the concept of the cyborg is put forward as a rejection of rigid boundaries, notably those separating “human” from “animal” and “human” from “machine”. Haraway writes that the unified human subject of identity has shifted to the hybridized posthuman of technoscience, from “representation” to “simulation,” “bourgeois novel” to “science fiction,” “reproduction” to “replication,” and “white capitalist patriarchy” to “informatics of domination.” All of this seems entirely prescient.

Coincidentally, at the same time of Haraway’s manifesto, neoliberalism’s project begins to really kick in with Thatcher and Reagan and brings us today to the complete dismantling of the West’s social liberal dream of a new society, with the last gasp of American exceptionalism ending in failed unilateral wars of colonialism and with silicon valley’s libertarianism the complete disintegration of the American social fabric. As the American psyche is tethered to its own individually curated hallucinatory feed of altered and augmented reality, lacing conspiracy theories with fake facts, the planet is ready to belch up its ungrateful parasite, the human and last best conquistador, the ugly American.





In such a condition, the neat and discrete work of art, a prize for an elite's consumption, another bauble to most likely be stored in a warehouse or end up in storage paid by the artist, such conditions become another obscene display of a complete failure to understand the contemporary condition. While the house is on fire, we still wish to grab all we can and get out, but get out where? So shoot, shoot the robot, shoot the kids, someone, shot me, shoot, shoot, shoot. Like Elmer Fudd, in *Rabbit Fire* we straight-facedly declare ourselves vegetarians shooting for sport only. As we strut on, full of greed and vanity, ever desiring attention under the spotlight of social media, the searchlight of day gives view to the wreckage left behind. And it's not neat and it's not discrete, but a network of detritus, the gasping glory holes of the phantasms of an eschatological dream become nightmare. Hence, the sprawl of this show.



Tragedy, Comedy Objects and Situations

Tableaux, Crime Scene, Altar

Pathos. What kind?

Tragedy as a form, a form that changes over time. Can there be tragedy outside depiction?

Ensemble

set up drum piece

mannequin ensembles

crime scene pictures

notes, objects, images

quarantine

possession

occupation

seeing through a meshed off area

poisoned earth

infectious material

sensing

wet colorful crash dripping with intravenous

a body spliced into the scene



Tableaux

meshing

*is there an orthinologist, stuffing birds
what is the narrative of the crime scene
the objectscene*

miseenscene

*lists of those executed here (mount joy)
species made extinct by human activities
a liquidation*

what is this, that is 'i'

*serious and comic, metaphysical and
farcical,
realistic and fantastic, often in a single
scene.*

Disappearance Absence Erasure

*A worldwide catastrophe is underway among an extraordinary group
of birds.*

*The disappearance of shore birds (godwits).
What is lost in their absence!*

Altar

The altar, made for sacrifice, indeed the equipment for sacrifice, of either something vegetable or animal, becomes at the same time or soon enough the shrine and in the modern era of art, the altar

becomes the pedestal, the vitrine, the floor.

The altar in a grander sense becomes

the temple, the pedestal, vitrine and frame, the gallery and museum.

In both, the sacred and profane, there is a desire to commune with supernatural powers, a desire to discover the pleasure of being beyond self, the will of gods, gods being us in our greater and augmented sense.

Surreal, Illogical, Conflictless and Plotless

Whereas traditional theatre attempts to create a photographic representation of life as we see it,

the Theatre of the Absurd aims to create a ritual-like, mythological, archetypal, allegorical vision, closely related to the world of dreams.

Ionesco defined the absurdist everyman as cut off from his religious, metaphysical,

and transcendental roots ... lost; all his actions become senseless, absurd, useless.

The Theatre of the Absurd, in a sense, attempts to reestablish man's communion with the universe.

One of the most salient aspects of absurd drama is its distrust of language as a means of communication. Language, it seems to say, has become nothing but a vehicle for conventionalized, stereotyped, meaningless exchanges.



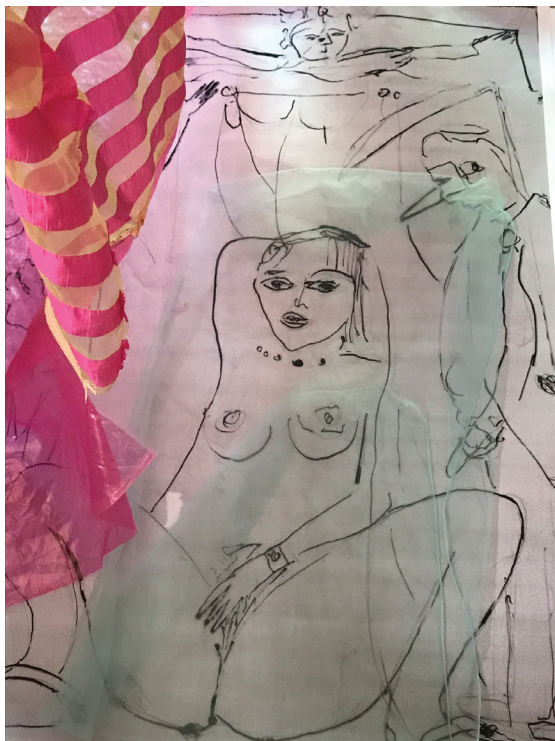


If I was an artist and I was in the studio, then whatever I was doing in the studio must be art. At this point art became more of an activity and less of a product. Bruce Nauman

I realized that my own way was in impoverishment, in lack of knowledge and in taking away, in subtracting rather than in adding. Samuel Beckett

tragic, ironic, mundane, black, farce
Huma Bhabha, Cathy Wilkes
dissected, dismembered
pathos, stripped down aesthetic
materials and display, assemblages of the tactile
disintegration, destruction, wearing away
poverty, failure, exile, loss
worn out, exhausted
the detritus of bodies or fragments of dead organisms

late capital information and biopolitical systems
 more a forensic looking
 an episteme of visual culture that can figure a poetics
 of beings amongst beings (Self Portrait as a Fountain)
 putting on art itself as a discipline, an art of visual
 presentation,
 of staging the material.



I love that other pic b/c it looks like the weirdest crime scene — odd copulating bodies strung about, loose threads, legs lying on the floor, cords going from here to there but who knows why or how — to strangle things? to power dildos? or something stranger? The whole scene is deliciously odd with hints of the macabre and erotic. Daniel Coffeen

Shoot Robot

The object and the object seen. The object as a shrine, an altar, the altar, a setting.

A clear plastic corrugate vitrine, a perfect cube, sits slightly off the floor. There is something inside. Something evidentiary, it seems. The small skeleton of a shorebird, some feathers.

Three other clear plastic corrugate vitrines, identical in size; inside one, some surgical tools, barbed wire, an RFID tag, small shards of shattered glass of an orange light bulb, a light fixture on a red rope with its socket of jagged glass. Another, with a pelican.

The four vitrines are neatly placed, separated at an even distance of two feet, and behind each vitrine hanging from the rafter, varied crinoline red, crimson, pink, taffeta sewn fabrics. Each vitrine, a kind of altar. A display.

There is something here that seems both ritualistic and evidentiary, a reliquary of sorts.



In the next room, there is a series of figures, 6 mannequin torsos, partial and reconfigured, dressed in various industrial sheen red judo gear, hospital wear, plastics, iconic columns, rubber hoses, silks, small megaphone (somewhere between Cathy Wilkes, Richard Tuttle, Paul McCarthy and Camille Heinrot). Almost comic, absurd, obscene, ridiculous, a social body as a kind of machine. A machine, a human social post-industrial network melange of something of a human machine toy organism and its wreckage (after the life raft).

In the next room, a giant search light pans left and right, up and down; intermittent glitchy light emits, and sparks. Headphone sets on the walls or QR code for phone, audio. Glitch accident neurolinguistic memes seem to be in synch with the search light. In a giant, silver-walled, mirrored blackboard, red lipstick writing says Shoot Robot.

32

Instascapes

Instascapes are lightweight sculptural transparencies mimicking camera filters. They are designed to be social and playful, produced at varying scales from window size to billboard size.

One of the most popular photo social networks is called Instagram, a

fun & quirky way to share your life with friends through a series of pictures.

Instascapes extend this idea by setting up a series of lightweight sculptural “frames” or “filters” and placing them strategically in the environment for us to see ourselves, our surroundings and our photography at a new scale and at a heightened appreciation.

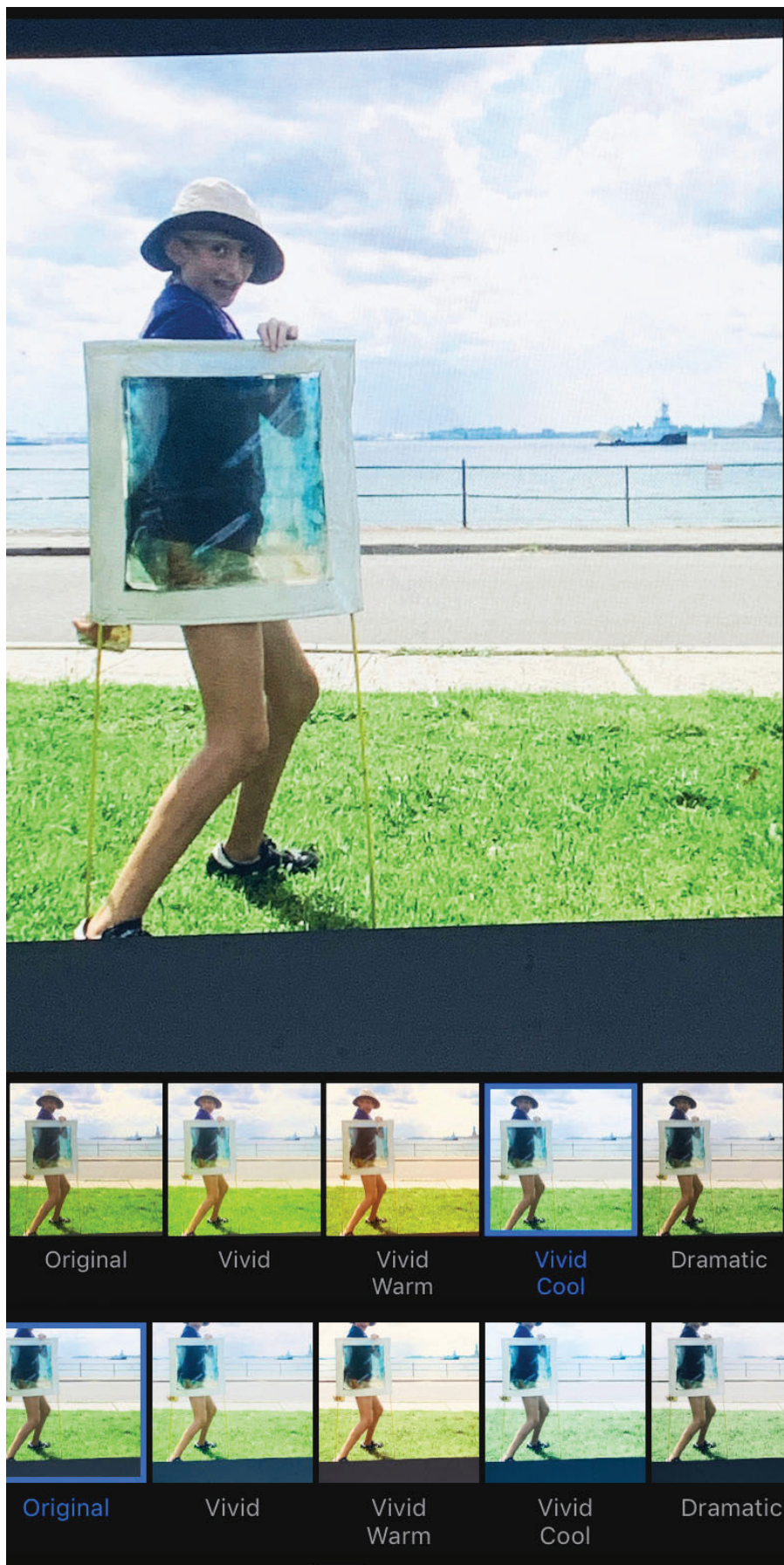
Instascapes explore further the continuum between the virtual and the real, between our software and social tools online and our social interactions in our physical spaces.

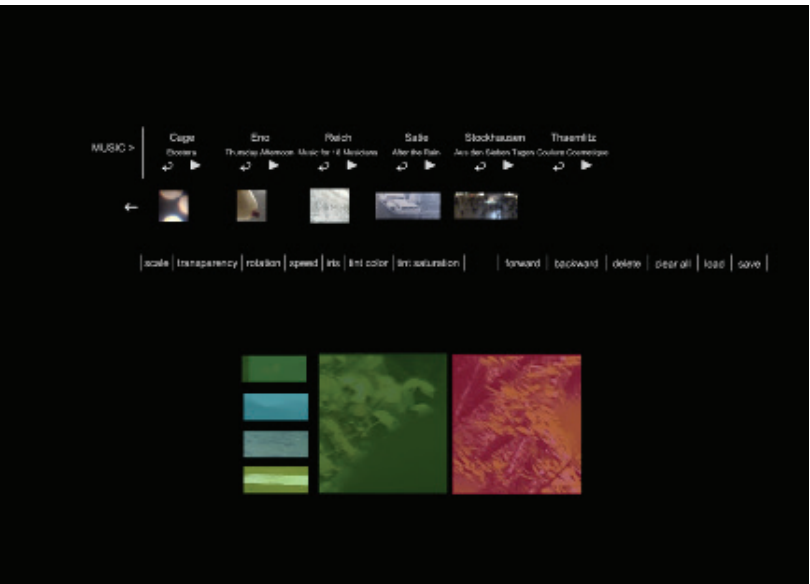
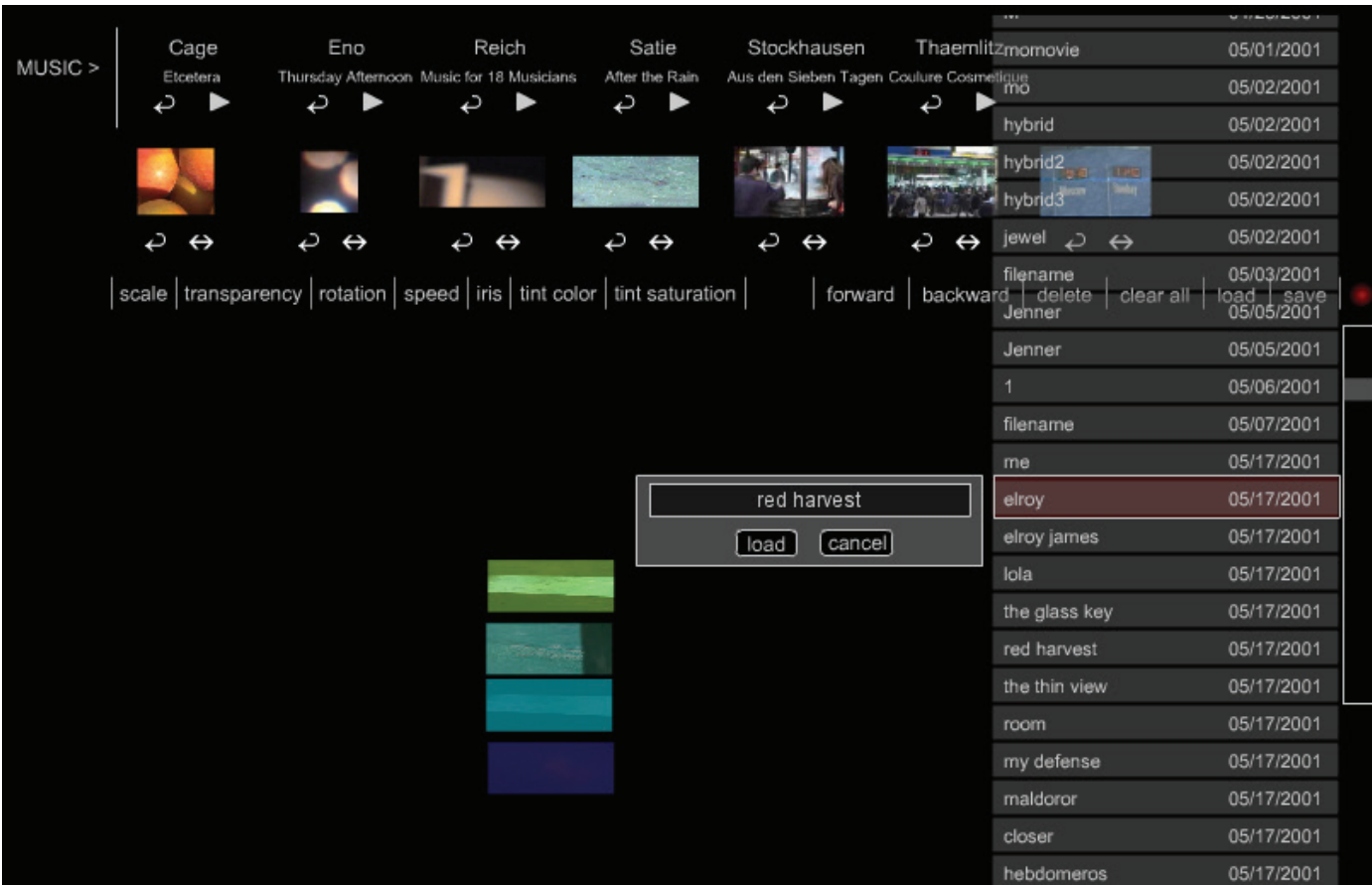
Minimizing the gap between individuality and earth—sculpture and music.

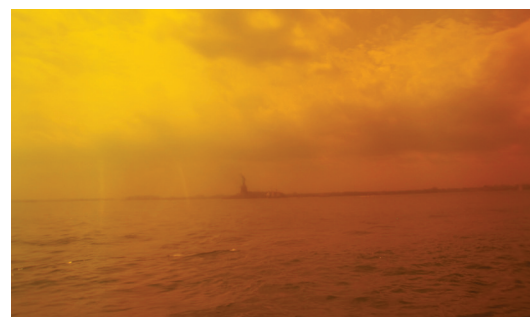
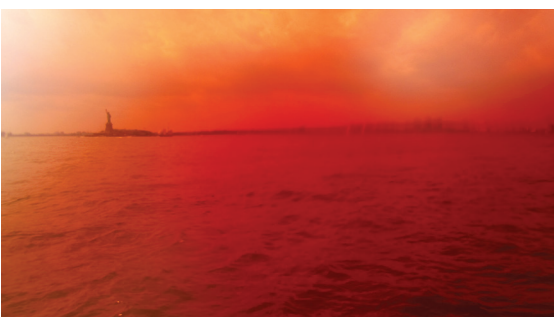
Like the photograph, the interface onto the information screen of the network is flat, a surface, at least for now. In the realm of sense and sensual affects, this flatness shares certain sensible properties, giving forth certain affects. It is not a world of the round or pointed, the jagged or draped, the spatially immersive. Though the photograph is one image and the interface more viewfinder than picture (or both simultaneously), they are both neither fuzzy nor plush, nor angular, nor volumetric; they have no mass.

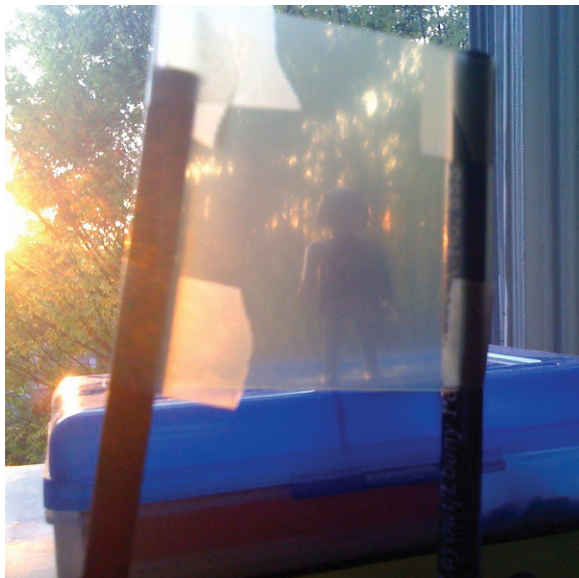
The architecture of sight.

From instascapes to light sculptures and fabric pieces.







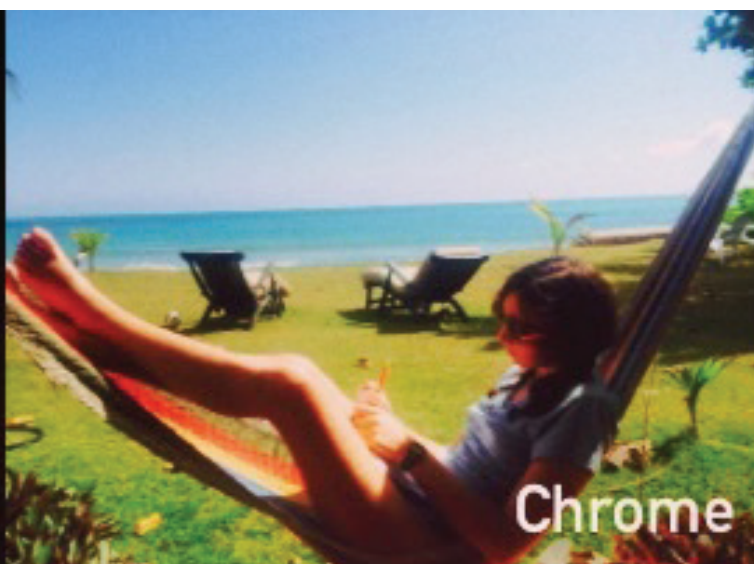








Noir



Chrome



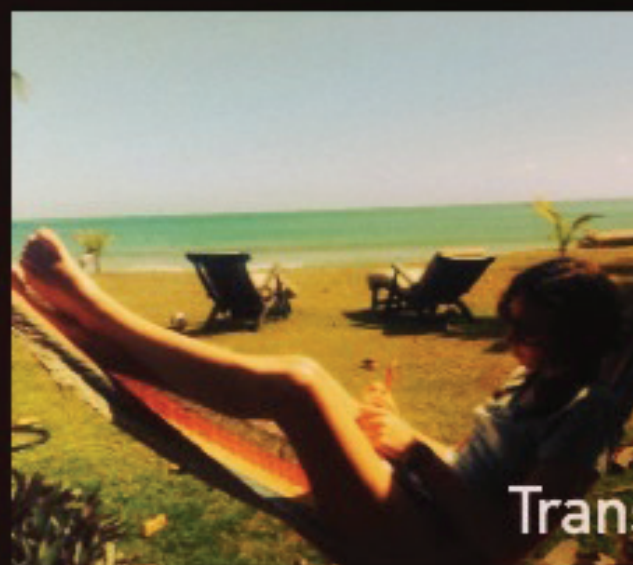
Ins



Tonal



None



Trans



Mono



Fade



Proc



33

**Picturing
Machines**

Where then does the reader orient themselves in a world that forever is writing, that is unbound, unmoored with a sea that is infinite, bounded but infinite. Writing, reading, researching inside the network, propels more and ever more texts, images, video, sounds and in turn more reading and writing. Our reading-writing for sometime has become computerized and machine added, and to manage it, as it exceeds the boundaries of human cognition, we use all kinds of algorithms that put forward all kinds of new associations that if we let them can take us on some very strange detours. That's because image search, all search, by computers are indifferent to the representations of the contents of those images, 'seeing' not, what for some, may be a site of trauma, but simply properties like density, edges, color, hue, reference tags, surface attributes that are for the machine-reading, without affect. The machine has no stake in the game, no doubts, no difficulties, no sensations. The human-machine coming together reading the world purports a new world, that tells us new things, but only if we want it to. If we let it can be an augury of sorts, an uncanny vanishing, a fleeting glimpse of sense, a fragment of agon, that gobbles us up like a cannibal into a nice little, white little, missionary stew.(1)

All contemporary fabrication of artworks are obsessed with archivability and want to defeat aging. I want to create a material that performs this vanishing, that takes on this stew, that contaminates, and leaks and like a tidal pool draws under the sway of search a cast of thousands of image text fragments that cling, in sunlight and darkness. Each sheet of everyday rice paper is taken from IKEA paper lamps, has a circular hole, and is crinkled and layered placed on top of other papers and images printed at different sizes which bleed and peer into each other. Each assemblage is a relation of images and each paper sheet, permutable in its ordering, and the paper itself diaphanous and fragile. I think of these work as a series of codices made with search algorithms, industrial materials and my horizontal curiosity that finds relations along numerous axes of narrative representation, color, scale, assemblage. In search things sometimes seems to be an infinite concertina, and not just one, but like an mc escher drawing, each a staircase leading in all directions, defying gravity. Where as an archive purports an authority, a closed corpus, a collection specificity, these codices operate like the function of search in the network ceaseless and never ending, forever allowing or banishing us to move laterally.

Where then to locate this work for the reader, a work that is perhaps more *Locus Solus* than *Mnemosyne*, more mutable than immutable mobile, more machine than form factor. (2) And yet there can be no denying that there is an inflection and strange attractors at work, that the work is more a machine itself that can continually re-write, reorder itself, an apparatus that writes, an android that dreams of electric sheep, not a flesh-and-blood author that makes one photograph, one image, one fixed image, but a machine-human that images itself. A picturing machine that dreams us, that in the name of logic and sense gives us, if we let it, an automatic writing, a dream of a thousand plateaus, a thousand years of non-linear history. (3) (4). It is not just texts and their representations but the concrete

movement of matter and energy through human populations, through our machines and technologies, that may, if we listen, be writing and heralding right now, in the midst of us, a post human history, where there are authors such as sea and storms, plant and animals beings, energies and substances that have been without authorship at the table of the human. (5)

So what then are the recipes, the inquiries asked of my picturing machines, and what are these artifacts that have resulted and what might they portend. I suppose they could be analyzed as dreams, deconstructed as archives, seen as poetry, as indictments, as revelries, as pictures reading pictures, as fragments and fragmentary, as all too human and not enough machines, as all too much of a western gaze, too earth bound, perhaps asking what is the sense that we demand as readers as authors, what are we looking for to get to the western lands. (6)

Does the picturing machine have something to say, a story telling turned into a kind of liberated reading or it is simply stage machinery where in there is nothing but scenic effects, a polyphony, a sprawling failure, an attempt to construct and resolve an intelligibility in the history ideas in a world gone mad, where all sense is the sense we make of it until the stage is swept away.

Footnotes

1. T. S. Eliot <http://genius.com/Ts-eliot-fragment-of-an-agon-annotated>
2. The last project of the German Jewish "cultural scientist" Aby M. Warburg (1866–1929), the *Mnemosyne Atlas* is an unfinished attempt to map the pathways that give art history and cosmography their pathos-laden meanings. Warburg thought this visual, metaphoric encyclopedia, with its constellations of symbolic images, would animate the viewer's memory, imagination, and understanding of what he called "the afterlife of antiquity."

<https://warburg.library.cornell.edu>

<http://curator.co/things-that-inspire-us-aby-warburg-mnemosyne-atlas/>

3. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (French: *Mille plateaux*) is a 1980 philosophy book by French authors Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, respectively a philosopher and a psychoanalyst. The authors draw upon and discuss the work of a number of authors, including Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, and Wilhelm Reich. *A Thousand Plateaus* is written in a non-linear fashion, and the reader is invited to move among plateaux in any order. It is the second volume of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, and the successor to *Anti-Oedipus* (1972). Before the full English translation by social theorist Brian Massumi appeared in 1988, the twelfth "plateau" was published separately as *Nomadology: The War Machine* (New York: Semiotext(e), 1986). Though

influential, and considered a major statement of post-structuralism and postmodernism, the book has been criticized on many grounds.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A_Thousand_Plateaus

4. Working against prevailing attitudes that see history as an arena of texts, discourses, ideologies, and metaphors, De Landa traces the concrete movements and interplays of matter and energy through human populations in the last millennium.

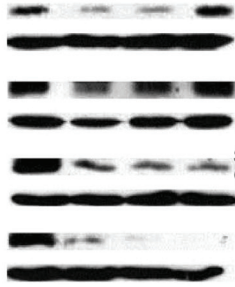
<https://mitpress.mit.edu/books/thousand-years-nonlinear-history>.

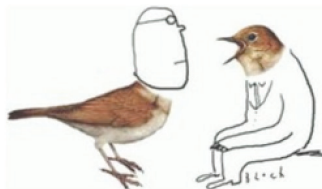
5. In her book *How We Became Posthuman*, N. Katherine Hayles, writes about the struggle between different versions of the posthuman as it continually co-evolves alongside intelligent machines.[20] Such coevolution, according to some strands of the posthuman discourse, allows one to extend their subjective understandings of real experiences beyond the boundaries of embodied existence. According to Hayles's view of posthuman, often referred to as technological posthumanism, visual perception and digital representations thus paradoxically become ever more salient. Even as one seeks to extend knowledge by deconstructing perceived boundaries, it is these same boundaries that make knowledge acquisition possible. The use of technology in a contemporary society is thought to complicate this relationship.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Posthumanism>

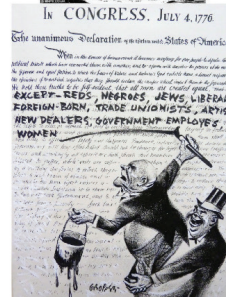
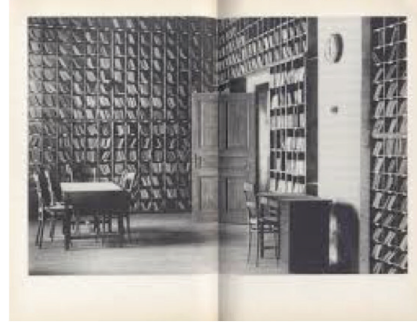
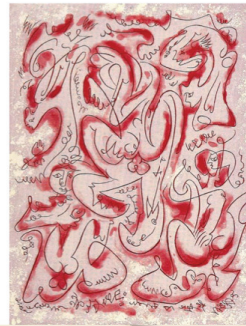
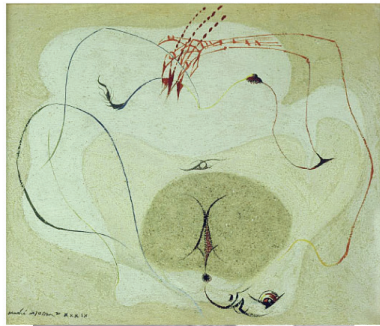
6. *The Western Lands* is a 1987 novel by William S. Burroughs, the final book of the trilogy that begins with *Cities of the Red Night* (1981) and continues with *The Place of Dead Roads* (1983). The title refers to the western bank of the Nile River, which in Egyptian mythology is the Land of the Dead. Inspired by the Egyptian *Book of the Dead*, Burroughs explores the after-death state by means of dream scenarios, hallucinatory passages, talismanic magic, occultism, superstition, and his characteristic view of the nature of reality.

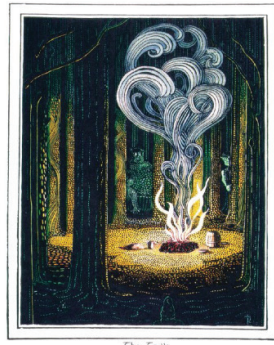








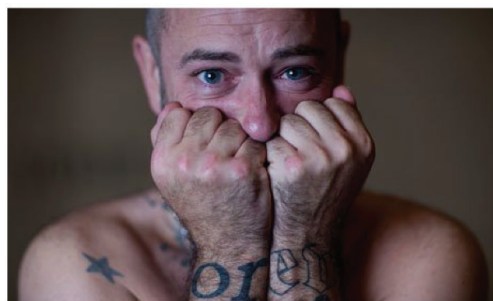
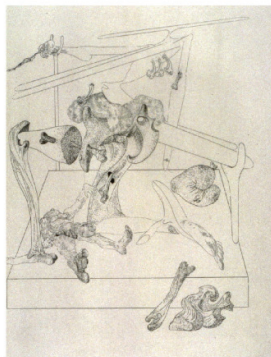




The Emalls



WATER WITH SAND



All I desired was to walk upon such an earth that had no maps. "
The English Patient, Michael Ondaatje

It was also clear you could not write directly about the horror of persecution in its ultimate forms, because no one could bear to look at these things without losing their sanity. So you would have to approach it from an angle, and by intimating to the reader that these subjects are constant company; their presence shades every inflection of every sentence one writes. If one can make that credible, then one can begin to defend writing about these subjects at all.
W. G. Sebald





34

**Instrumental
Reason**

I want to make an image of society's instruments and substrates of visualization, to see them seeing us, but it's not us that they see, but simply edges and colors, patterns and hues, likes and clicks, border crossings, credit card transactions, all of it numerical encodings in vast tables of databases. If camera vision and images were once seen and ordered through human agency, they are now seen and retrieved by machines. As such we mustn't look at images as indexical of human affect but of machine processing and "seeing," turning the realm of human sensibility and action into something strangely abject and the human into a very new kind of object. This vast realm of everyday recording, of computerized seeing, sensing, tracking, aggregating and permissioning, makes of us, the messy and emotional, a signal, an index, of dissolute and atomized data at a time when we are wont of discourse and sociality.

(<http://cargocollective.com/marclafia/Concatenations>)

All Watched Over by Corot
lamp paper, white thread 105.75" x 66.75"





A specific note on the Corot work, *All Watched Over by Corot*.

For these new prints I've been working on creating a new print substrate. The substrate is more of a topology than the flat surface we always see prints on. Ordinarily with prints, the material surface, except for the finish, is thought of as a non-thing. We're suppose to see past it, to the image, the print surface is something we aren't really seeing. I want to see this material, and I want it to announce itself performatively. I want it to be part and parcel of the image, a body and thought, a substance, in and of itself and part of the image. Something that speaks to seeing and sight but more precisely, touch and sight and different kinds of seeing.

The print sheet is sewn together from paper sheets that come in packages for IKEA paper lamps. I like the idea of the paper being industrial, everyday, and whose purpose is to be a light and in this case the light bulb missing.

Photography is light but today's image is stored as data. It is impossible to touch data. Machine sight and computational information increasingly eclipses the somatic and empathic, skin and flesh, sight and touch, and the data body politic becomes a biopolitic, an atomized swarm. Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot, a harmonist of color, in his paintings imbues in nature a beneficence, a beauty, life, and grace. To us, this may seem overly romantic, an effusion of pathos. But you can touch his painting and see it. I want to touch the image. I want it to be palpable. I want to feel it, its ripples, folds and contours, its cracks and creaks, its impermanence, its body. Paint does have a body that print doesn't. By rethinking print paper and using this paper that folds and deforms I want bring body to the image and embodied sense to the viewer.

In the image, Corot's landscape painting, *Ville-d'Avray* (17.2" x 29.3") is printed 4 times the size of its original, and is seen overlaid, on top smaller images of the same painting "read" or scanned in sections by Pinterest's "visually similar" algorithms, and on top of that a country side landscape being surveilled by an Aerostat blimp equipped with radar that can "look" in 360-degree circles. Corot's landscape is seen and imagined—he made many preparatory sketches outdoors on location—by a closely felt and observed world, and environ. He wrote, "Beauty in art is truth bathed in an impression received from nature. I am struck upon seeing a certain place. While I strive for conscientious imitation, I yet never for an instant lose the emotion that has taken hold of me."

In contrast the other two "seeings" in the picture are machine and algorithmic seeing, each transposing what is seen of datasets of billions of pins or other data. In the case of the Pinterest image search, by specifying a part of the image using the cropping tool, one can scan the Corot reproduction, just as the JLens Aerostat scans the landscape, in real time. In both cases, and in "search," "exact," as well as "unexpected" results, along lines of what is similar in style, pattern, shape or coordinates are interpolated and delivered. What fascinates me here is the disjunction between my sense of pattern recognition and the rule sets of these visual engines and what they retrieve along this spectrum of "exact." Machine rules-based seeing and human affective, socially constructed seeing, are of very different orders and registers. They are different patterns or programs of recognition. In this picture I want to see each of these "seeings" simultaneously, from the most romantic to the most indifferent, from human to machine, effectively transposed and most of all, not flat. I want my image to be touched, not simply by a flat indifferent surface or a screen, but a body, a topology, ever changing, vulnerable and impermanent.

What you are seeing here on the web site is not yet the print image on the sewn paper, that's in production now, so what you are seeing here is flat as. I will update as we move through the print production in the next few weeks.

(<http://cargocollective.com/marclafia/Concatenations>)



Asafir bila Ajniha, Wingless Birds

2017 69" x 92" lamp paper, white thread, C-print

Al-Kindi (c. 801–873) was one of the earliest important optical writers in the Islamic world. In a work known in the west as *De radiis stellarum*, al-Kindi developed a theory “that everything in the world ... emits rays in every direction, which fill the whole world.”[8]

This theory of the active power of rays had an influence on later scholars such as Ibn al-Haytham, Robert Grosseteste and Roger Bacon.[9]

Ibn Sahl (c. 940–1000) was a mathematician[10] associated with the court of Baghdad. About 984 he wrote a treatise *On Burning Mirrors and Lenses* in which he set out his understanding of how curved mirrors and lenses bend and focus light. In his work he discovered a law of refraction mathematically equivalent to Snell’s law.[11] He used his law of refraction to compute the shapes of lenses and mirrors that focus light at a single point on the axis.

Ibn al-Haytham (known in as Alhacen or Alhazen in Western Europe) (965–1040) produced a comprehensive and systematic analysis of Greek optical theories.[12] Ibn al-Haytham’s key achievement was twofold: first, to insist that vision occurred because of rays entering the eye; the second was to define the physical nature of the rays discussed by earlier geometrical optical writers, considering them as the forms of light and color. He then analyzed these physical rays according to the principles of geometrical optics. He wrote many books on optics, most significantly the *Book of Optics* (*Kitab al Manazir* in Arabic), translated into Latin as the *De aspectibus* or *Perspectiva*, which disseminated his ideas to Western Europe and had great influence on the later developments of optics.[13][6]

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_optics, “Optics and vision in the Islamic world”)

should one day be revealed to us another earth, teeming with thinking beings upon it. And we know millions of miles distant, with thinking beings upon it. And we know, in theory at any rate, be covered, even then, that these distances can, whereas the early navigators were afraid that an enormous nothingness might lie before them.

Certain incidents will remind us of how absolute, complete, and intransigent were the dilemmas which confronted our predecessors in the sixteenth century. Take, for instance, what they called Hispaniola: the Haiti and San Domingo of our day. In 1492 there were about a hundred thousand people on those islands. They were to dwindle in the next hundred years to a mere two hundred, not by any disgust at European civilization were to kill them off quite as effectively as disease and ill treatment. The colonists couldn't make these people out, and a commission after commission was sent to enquire into their nature. If they were really men, were they perhaps the descendants of the lost tribes of Israel? Or Mongols who had ridden over on elephants? Or Scotsmen, brought over some centuries earlier by Prince Madoc? Had they always been pagans, or were they lapsed Catholics who had once been baptized by St Thomas? That they were really men, and not animals or creatures of the devil, was not regarded as certain.

In 1512, for instance, King Ferdinand authorized the importation of white women as slaves into the West Indies, with the object of preventing the Spaniards from marrying the native women 'who are far from being rational creatures'. And when Las Casas tried to put an end to forced labour in the islands the colonists were not so much indignant as incredulous. 'What?' they said. 'Does he want to stop us using our beasts of burden?'

The most famous of the commissions is, quite rightly, that of the monks of the Order of St Dominic in 1517. The story is worth recalling both for the light it throws on the mental attitudes of the time and for the marks of the humanity which was to be well and truly banished from colonial life. The inquiry was held on the most up-to-date psychological and social grounds, and in the course of it the colonists were asked whether, in their estimation, the Indians were capable of running their own societies like the European peasantry. A unanimous 'No' was the answer. 'Their grandchildren just *might* be up to it, but they're so profoundly anti-social that you couldn't be sure. Take an instance: they dodge the Spaniards when they can, and you can't get them to work for nothing, and yet sometimes you'll find them giving all their belongings away. And when we cut the ears off one of them they all





النعام الوارد لأن الحجرة شتهت بنهر النعام قد ورد الشهور ويسمى الذي على المنكب الايسر والذي على فوق السهم والذي على
الكتف الايسر والذي على تحت الابط وهو بعيد عن الحجرة الى ناحية المشرق النعام الصادق وشهتها العرب بنعام شربت
من الشهور صدرت ويسمى اللذين على السببة الشمالية من القوس الظلمين واللذين على الفخذ اليسرى والساق الصريدين وهذه صورتها

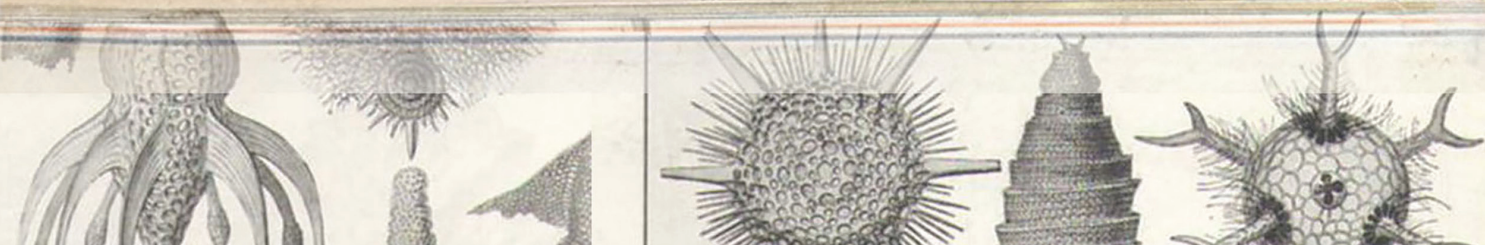


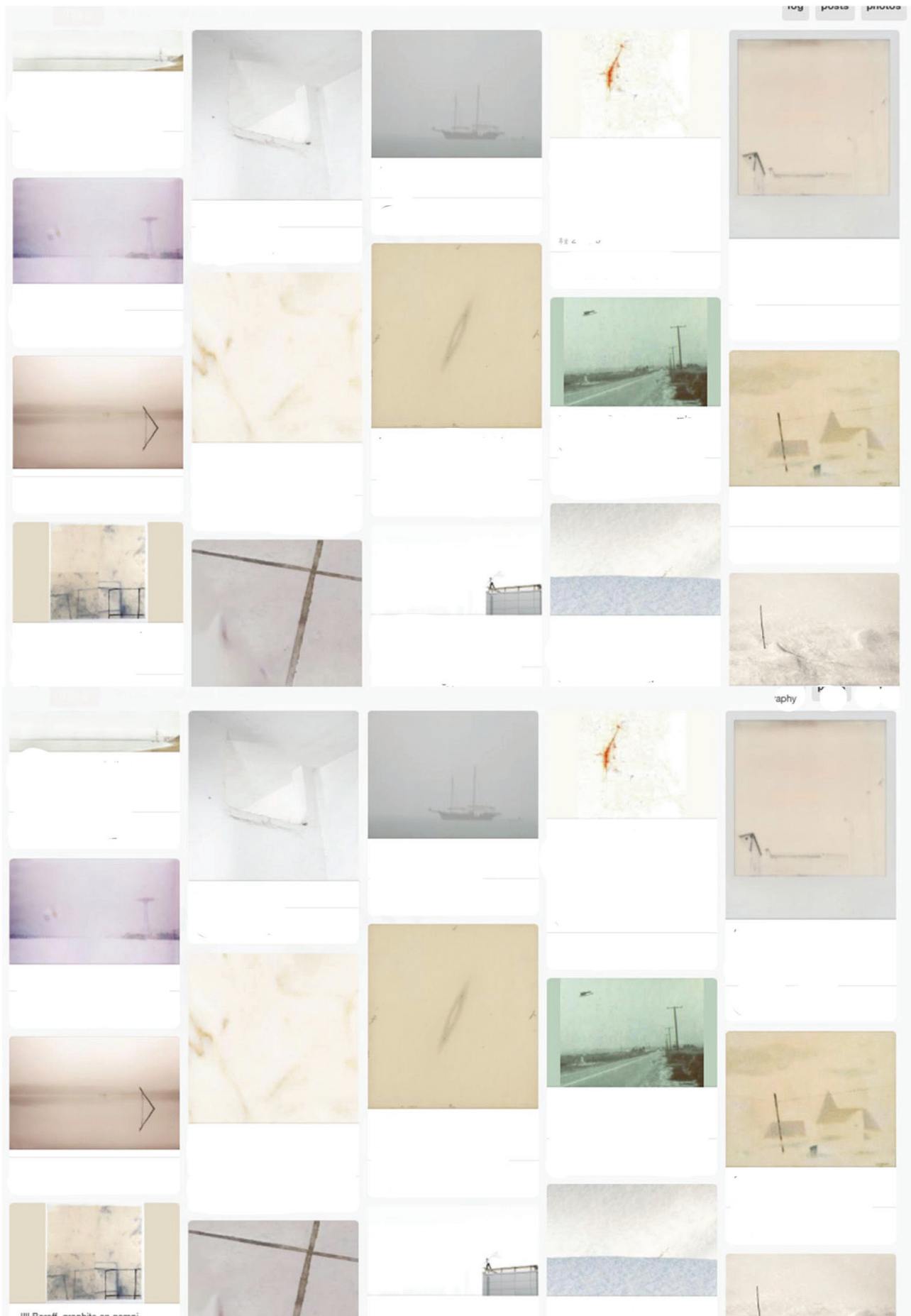
كوكب تجدي

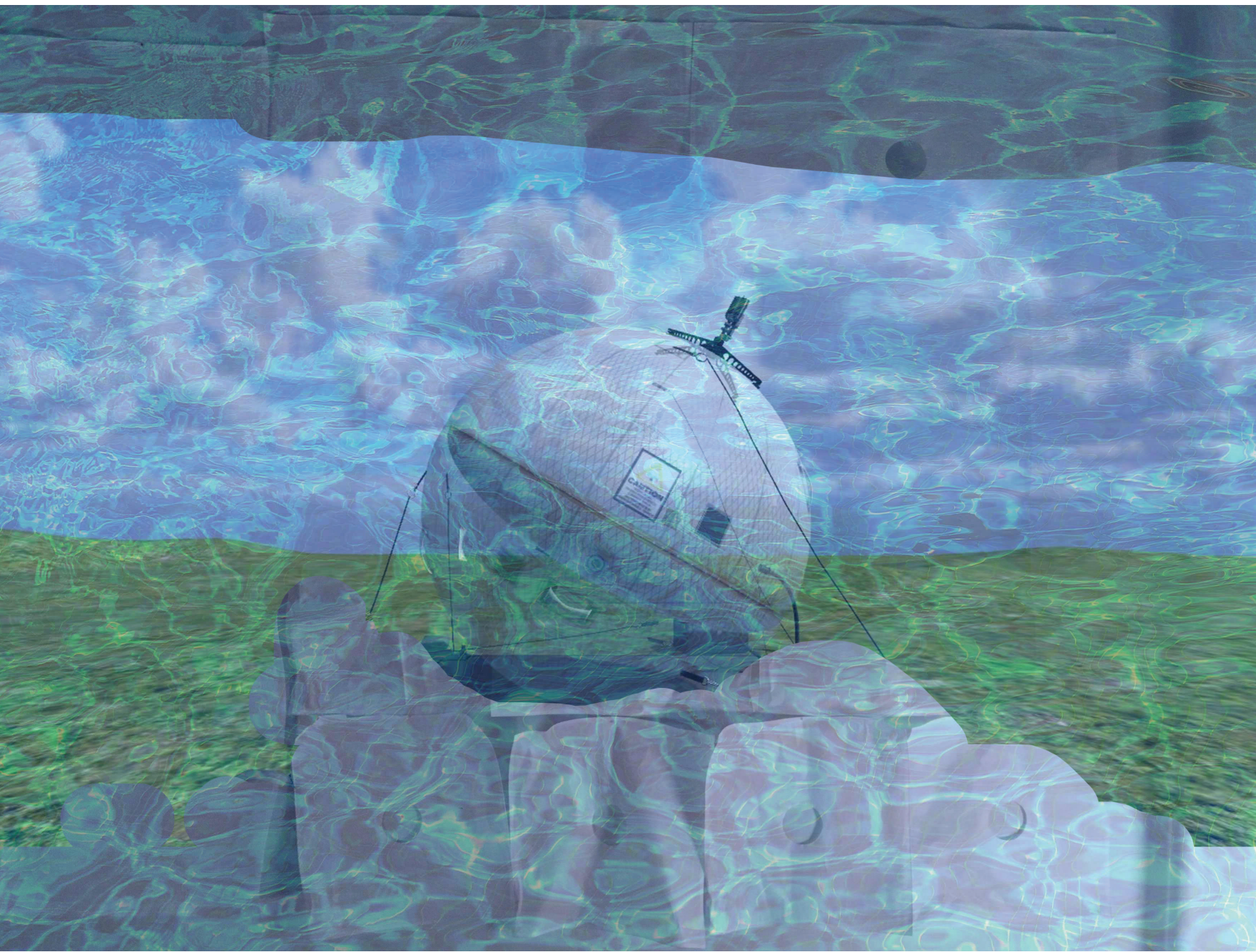
ثمانية وعشرون كوكبا من الصور وليس حوالى الصور شئ من الكواكب المصودة والعرب تسمى الاثنين اللذين على القدر



التاني سعد الذابح
لأن احد مائتين والآخر
خفي فسمى الكبير الذابح و
الصغير الملاقولة قالوا
انه شاة يذبحها ويسمى
الاثنين الذين اللذين
على الذنب المحبين
وهذه صورتها







I Can Hear You 2017 69" x 92" lamp paper, white thread, print

35

In
What
Language
To
Come



In his new body of work Marc Lafia invites us to deeply immerse ourselves in our senses. Best known as a conceptual photographer and filmmaker, he has taken up something very new and sensate here. If in his past work he created an image of seeing, here he creates that which sees and folds our senses of touch and sight.

Maybe it was the his time in Japan and the ambience of the Setouchi Islands or wanting more to touch materials and light with his hands, to make something immersive, additive, sensual, sensate, something alive. Here he presents not an object image, but an object event, an event of being, of light and temperature, of texture, both of material, and its relation to the environment, and its beholding.

If his early works emerge in and around network culture—which has now become so pervasive it's invisible—this new work is not of virtual bodies and performative identities, but rather gives forth a site specific embodiedness, a sense of touch that affects sight. Rather the world at the screen, at a remove, as an abstract thing, that is managed as a thing, as data, this new work re-situates and re-positions us, literally into the fabrics of material life.

If Lafia was interested in the social body in the network, its power to shrink the world, here he is interested in the ambient and experiential, the layered and contingent, the variable event of a realm of materials constructed and arranged to be pliable and responsive, to revealing themselves in their ambient character as they drape and drift.

Each of the pieces—all fabric works and light sculptures—are pliable, complicated and textured, made of silk, plastic, neoprene, rubber, latex, paper, all pleated, elegantly engineered with stitching and zippers, each folding onto and into each other, responsive to heat and cold, light and dark, time. Though

precarious, they are enduring and will endure, each work embodying material memory, each adaptable, agile, and resilient and made to wear their decay. Like us, they seem to hang together while falling apart.

In his inviting philosophical title, Lafia asks many questions, both of his objects and his audience. What is it to finish when we never really finish? What is a today, a now, as we live in the event of becoming? After all, these works change with temperature, change as to how they are hung or installed, become other as they are layered over with varying works of the series. In a most beautiful way, they give forth in their site specific placement a singular and tactile experience of light and form, and shape. And yet from one instant to the next they are variable, becoming stable, then unstable, as they work to perform and adapt in their environment. They are a language, a material that is continually to come.

Perhaps Lafia here, amongst all the sumptuous textures and hues of colors, has come upon tactile seeing and wants us to re-embody ourselves with delight, to realign touch to sight, alert and alive to the full amplitude of our senses.

(<https://vimeo.com/219447231>)





The Worldly Hope men set their Hearts upon
Turns Ashes—or it prospers; and anon,
Like Snow upon the Desert's dusty Face
Lighting a little Hour or two—is gone.

(Omar Khayyam, translated by Edward Fitzgerald)

The beginning of volume. An architecture of light.

























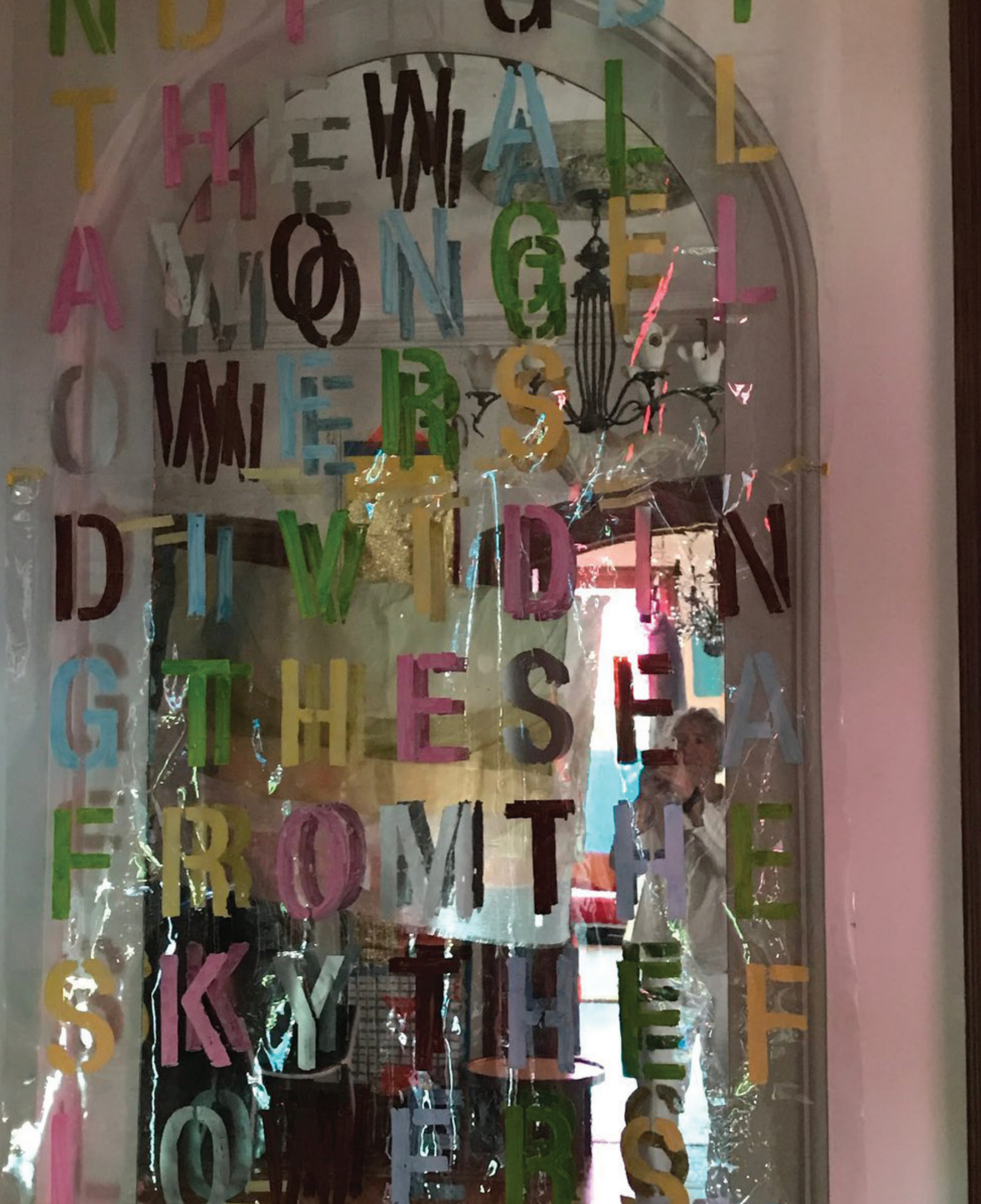






























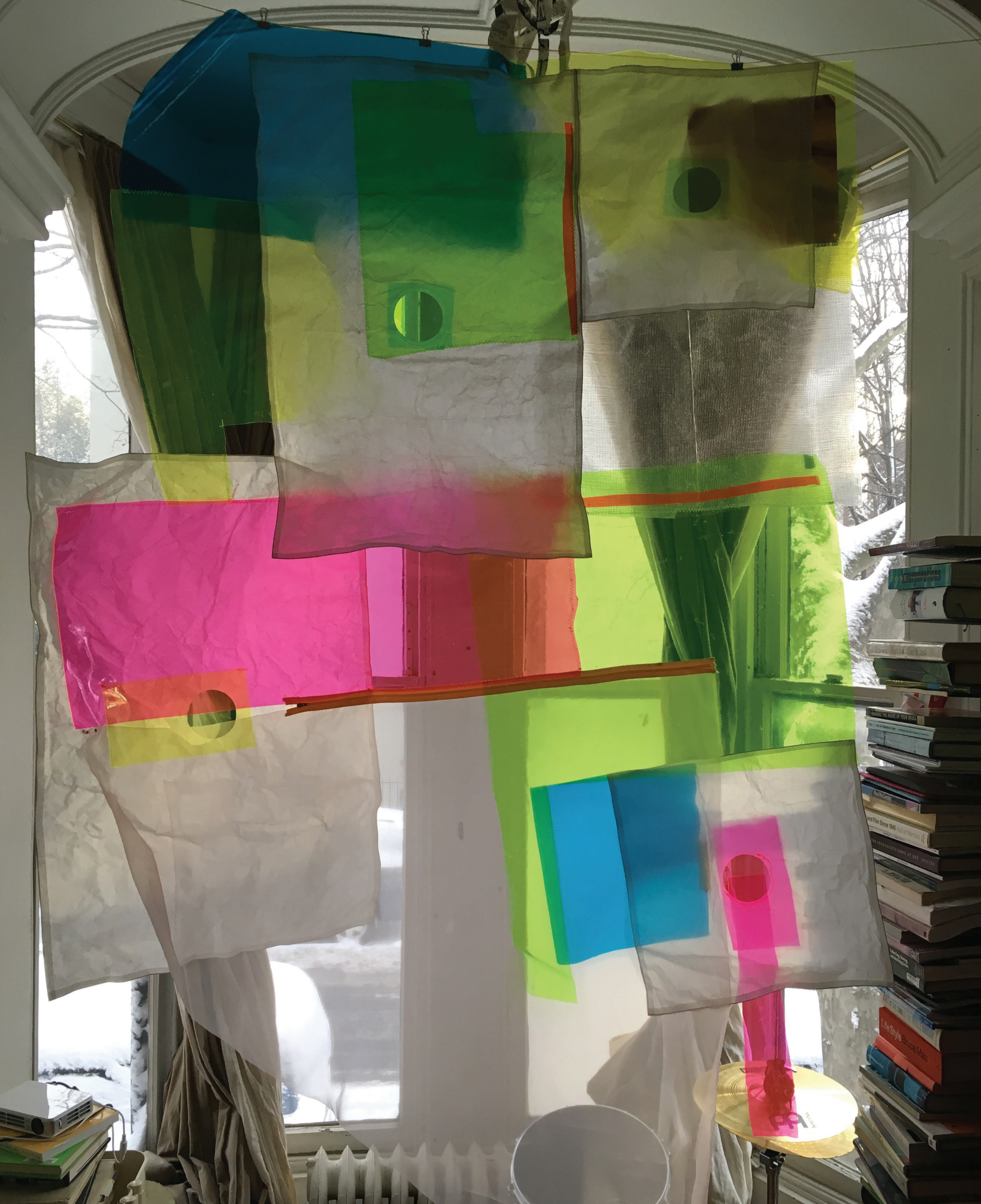
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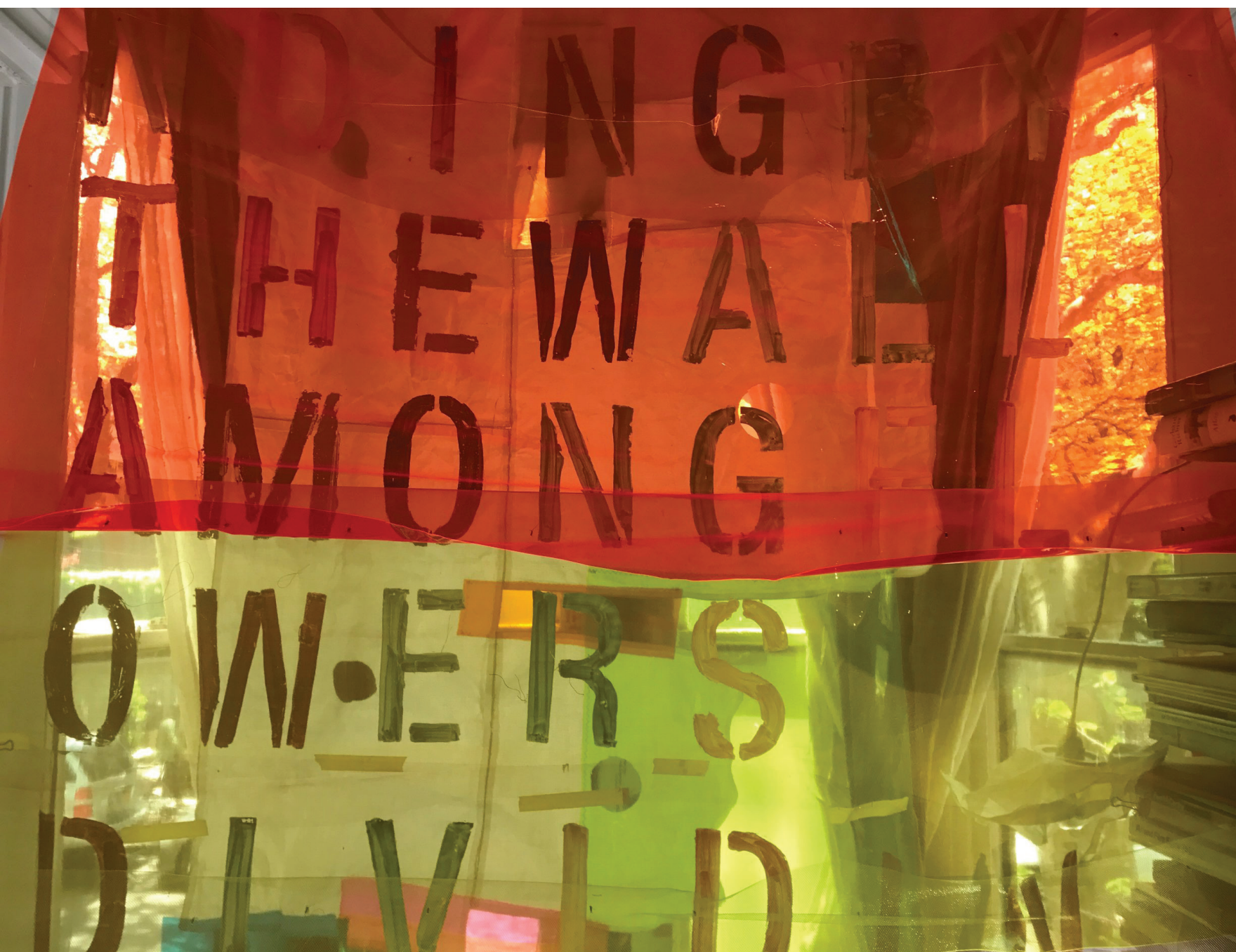
OD

























In the new statement, "the precarious," I want to connect my foray into the non-image to the non-screen world of materiality. thinking about it, this is what i did with the anatomy series and with the book sculptures. here i turn to industrial materials, plastics, ikea light paper, rubber, latex, neoprene, silk, gauze - each with very specific qualities of opacity, weight, texture and feel, and each carrying with them some sense of a human interaction, now presented as a poetic relation, in the form of a new object made with familiar materials one would find in clothing, in hospitals or plumbing. i see it moving from sight, seeing (instascapes) to allusions (don't know the right word) metaphors, of sexuality and the body, as well as death and the subconscious-skin, tubes, wardrobe vinyls, why latex seems to me an artificial skin, not sure.

1. The Precarious

As the values of liberty, equality, and fraternity have been replaced in the 21st century by comfort, security, and sustainability, how can we respond? We are fed cute icons of urban life, integrated with harmless devices, cohering into pleasant diagrams in which citizens and business are surrounded by more and more circles of service that create bubbles of control.

These bubbles in our lives have become increasingly facilitated and embedded with all kinds of digital infrastructure and networks, devices, sensors and actuators; and the volume of data produced about us, and the information graphics and analytics to display and understand this data, has grown exponentially. Yet, in a very certain sense, all of this has made us increasingly anxious and lost. We are following screens, not knowing where we are and what's around us. As we transfer authority to the market and data, to our sensors and screens and the analytics of this information, the dominant values of our culture increasingly privilege sight over touch, information over empathy, the cognitive over the sensate, the image over the event. Working principally in the realm of the image, moving image and the society of the network, in this new work, I want to engage with the ambience of light, the qualities of touch, the situational and the environment, the materiality of the event of light, plastic, rubber and paper, each with its own tactility.

Taking cues from the society of data and its representations in abstractions and pristine graphics, here the work, screen-like, is messy, risky, unmanageable; and legibility, uncertain. In this inverted order, play supersedes reason, the continuous overcomes the discrete, and the embodied and material takes the fore over the virtual and immaterial. If the central emergent feature of modernity was the further development of a rational capacity and at the height

of abstraction there was the idea of an ideal, a certain perfection or purity or simplicity these works bring show a materiality that is torn, uncertain, sheared and sewn. According to Heidegger, calculative thinking

paces from one prospect to the next. [It] never stops, never collects itself.
Calculative thinking is not meditative thinking, not thinking which contemplates the meaning which reigns in everything that is.

For Heidegger, the modern world is under the one-sided dominance of this type of thinking and as a result the earth now appears “as an object open to the attacks of calculative thought, attacks that nothing is believed able any longer to resist.” The instrumental rationality of Big Data has become a tool used by elite power for imposing order, dominance and control. The future will likely reflect narrow corporate and state visions rather than the desires of wider society, a society and myself that want to become re-embodied, present to the material and ambience of the world.

Everything is dissolving, we are all falling you better give it away.

Working principally in the realm of the image, moving image and the society of the network, I want here to engage with the ambience of light, the qualities of touch, the situational and the environment, the materiality of the event of light, plastic, rubber and paper, each with its own tactility.

to get away from flatness, from the informational, the too cognitive in its apprehension and move to the sense of touch, volume, light, object hood, not so much as a thing but as a presence with the apprehender. something that sees with me, something i see through, not an image, but light passing through, oddly a kind of camera, camera filter, a very simple apparatus, both a thing and a processing, an ambient translucence.

what interest me in this work - are ambient and experiential qualities, the layered and contingent, the variable event of a realm of materials constructed and arranged that are for the most part (except perhaps for Eva Hesse) considered too precarious, unstable and of a lower grade for global art products. after all, these works change in temperature, change as to how they are hung or installed, become other as they are layered over with varying work of the series. in a most beautiful way they give forth in their site specific placement a singular and tactile experience of light, form and shape. in every instant of their being they are singular, variant, stable but unstable, as they work to perform and adapt in their environment.

Each work is a pliable, complicated and textured surface, made of silk, plastic, neoprene, rubber, latex, paper, all pleated, all folding onto each other, into each other, responsive to heat and cold, light and dark, time. all the while they are enduring and precarious, embodying material memory, adaptable, agile and resilient and made to wear their decay.. these works can live on the floor, piled up, placed against a window, or on a clothing line in the rain or at sea, all the while building character and history. these are works made in the computational age but speak back and forward to the embodied and material, to the specificity of now, the living now and yesterday and tomorrow.

If we think of other surfaces of art; paintings on canvas, prints on archive paper, 3d printing, sculpture in bronze, aluminum, video of ephemeral performances, they are fixed, unchanging - and in that sense an image, always to be that image.

Why has Lafia, most noted as a conceptual photographer, filmmaker and occasional painter, turned away from the image to produce this new work.

If the previous work is the event of seeing, reading, performing reading, the new works interest me as events unto themselves, not about my seeing, but these things being modes of going and seeing, yes they afford seeing but they in themselves are a material presence, not solely an image

"Plastics", in overall, is the most versatile and useful material invented by humans but this versatility is due to thousands of compounds of different compositions and properties.

Reality, this earth, all of it, from the atomic to the mythic is full of tears, folds, holes and cuts, all of it delicate, fragile, contingent, interlocking, a mesh of fabrics. In these works all i want the material to be a record of those that touched it. In a fabric store, this one the mood fabric store in the shrinking garment district of Nyc customers often ask for samples of particular fabrics, so you see all the hazardous cuts of the fabrics here, translucent, transparent, zig zagged into each other, things falling apart, stitched together, laying over one another, silk and synthetics, Fiberglas and gauze, forged and folded together, on the precipice, a retina, a flag, detritus, derangement and arrangement.



36

Everywhere
There
Are
Starting
Points

What Deleuze and Guattari say in the following about philosophy can indeed be said for art:

Those who do not renew the image of thought are not philosophers but functionaries who, enjoying a ready-made thought, are not even conscious of the problem and are unaware even of the efforts of those they claim to take as their models.

There is no more a privileged form than there is a privileged starting point. Everywhere there are starting points, intersections and junctions that enable us to learn something new...

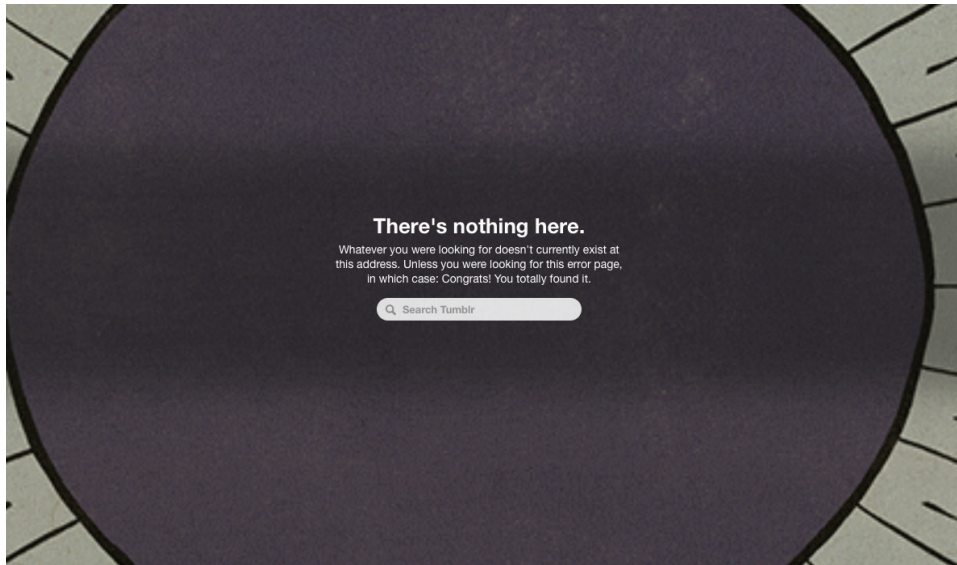
Jacques Rancière, *The Emancipated Spectator*

Human society is structured by narratives, immaterial scenarios, which are more or less claimed as such and are translated by lifestyles, relationships to work or leisure, institutions, and ideologies... Why not use art to look at the world, rather than stare sullenly at the forms it presents?

Nicolas Bourriaud, *Post Production*

I like this very much: using art to look at the world, as forms which project possible scenarios and which can imply the creation of new scenarios.





And yet, following *In What Language to Come*, I have immersed myself in more and more tactile, sensate work turning on questions of form, space, volume, and tactility. Like the cinema of the early '60s to the mid '70s, the 1965–70 art of the same period is immensely rich.

I do not say this nostalgically. Minimalism, conceptualism, process art, performance, three-dimensional objects, etc., everything before the Pictures Generation (that's me) has now, for me, become most interesting.

Wittgenstein and Beckett infuse this period. *What* expressivity is, and *where*, opens up radically at this time. The body, space, the object; the relation to the audience, to society, to politics; indeed, the whole conception of what an artwork is or should be, a facing up to a mass-production society, hoping to drag a rough poetry out of the confused and powerful forces which are at work.

All of this seems to be dogmatically as well as symptomatically worked out reading *Continuous Project Altered Daily* by Robert Morris—this, and a great many artists' essays. This, a very articulate generation (Robert Irwin, Hockney, Nauman, Andre, Kosuth, Smithson, Judd, LeWitt, Weiner, Matta-Clark; the post-Rothko Reinhardt generation, each of them cogent, lucid writers).

Whereas in grad school I was reading French theorists which greatly informed Relational Aesthetics, the artists above articulate themselves lucidly outside a theoretical frame (cultural studies, post-colonial studies, queer studies, feminist studies, all excellent), but most certainly within a philosophical frame, if we can distinguish the two. Perhaps the difference between analytic and continental philosophy. Whereas the '70s was a time of play and experimentation across categories, this play had to give way to the realpolitik of very real positions, where more and more voices, opinions and positions had to come to the table. And so, from the '80s on, positions hardened. And necessarily so.



So much contemporary art is *propositional*, setting out to prove or illustrate *x*, *y*, or *z*. On the other hand, it is product, as critics have said, of a good deal of zombie formalism:

Works of art remain afloat on a sea of words. Those refractory facts, art works, are launched into the treacherous currents of language with its sudden undertows, backwaters, and shifting mainstreams. Works will sink out of sight, cause ripples or even occasional tidal waves. But this trackless, navigational nightmare is not without direction. For below, silently at work, is that force that waits for no man: the tidal pull toward judgment that assigns to works a certain coefficient of power measured in terms of cold cash and those slippery verbal chips to be redeemed for a piece of history.

(Robert Morris)

This is not to say there is not critique: take Matta-Clark, whose oeuvre appears to be motivated by an endless critique of the status quo, critique of the separation between genres, critique of production methods, critique of hierarchies leading onto a critique of institutions. But not identity, not subject, not gender positions; not yet, anyway.

An art that refuses to stand up functionally on its own becomes a sign of what Robert Smithson (1966: 304) calls “a dialectics of entropic change.”

Perhaps my investigation of light, objects, form, space is without critique as I had been taught and is more properly in the realm of discovery, a material discovery, a sensate discovery of my sense of touch and tactility. I have, on

more than a few occasions, become self-conscious of the looking back, though I never looked back until I was there to find, and realize *this, yes, this is what was the urgency of a time now gone*. I then allowed myself to think of it as being a kind of *Pin Ups*, the seventh studio album by David Bowie containing cover versions of songs,

(“These songs are among my favourites from the ‘64–‘67 period of London”, DB)

released in 1973.

I would not say I am doing cover versions of this work. But it is a great period from which to more deeply understand contemporary art’s repertoire.

Been reading much on the tragic and Zen, on mourning and humor.

So why, why do anything? What’s the reason? What’s it about? What am I to say? What does the artist do? How and where do I take on the world? Be of the world? Say something about the world. But what world? Whose world? Yes, how and why am I creating the things I am?

Too argue for or against Ad Reinhardt’s pronouncement:

Art is art. Everything else is everything else.

You can choose an active or passive nihilism, to endure, but perhaps in a zen sense one can be. This doesn’t mean passive resignation—not at all—because to be is to let yourself be.

Where once

turning modernist forms against the ideologies that saw them emerge—the modern ideologies of emancipation, of the sublime—as well as against the art world and its beliefs’ would be meaningful

...

to reveal the invisible structures of the ideological apparatus; to deconstruct systems of representation that revolve around a definition of art as visual information that destroys entertainment

(*pace* Bourriard) I don’t see this critique as viable, nor do I see viable the notion of the construction of new myths that invoke a people-yet-to-come.

Art is also a social practice in that it is a conversation. Art is also a social practice in that it is a conversation: a conversation with all the materials of this world, all its formats and discourses, people and cultures, time future and time past.

Though I live in New York City and do see a good deal of work, the social component and social discourse around it is mostly through shows and reading. The world of art, not unlike show business, is a business, not only for dealers and curators but also for academics and artists, and necessarily so, a business on the hustle, working it, eager to catch the next new thing or enter into a bigger market.

Here, like a photograph, from a dear, dear friend:

as always lovely to hear from you and I have been getting the texts etc
just been mad busy... way too much going on always constantly hard to pause
keep up concentrate breathe
art fairs travel visits more art fairs travel exhibitions but sooo little in the way of
art think about it really engaged with what its supposed to be do
just worried how to keep it moving keep it paying our crazy rents expenses
production tuition's mortgages utilities dinner
love it that you can immerse yourself in the bowels of it
like wittgenstein and beckett
like smithson, judd, lewitt, weiner, matta-clark
not like the like generation
everything on my side is very surface... foregrounded by \$
makes art very small... like everything else (rheinhardt)
love you too
Be well in sweden! lets plan for some down time this summer
and your next moves

HUGZ M

BTW- This is a show we did at the gallery of young artist Lin Ke... It inspired me to write a bit and theres my article at the end of this epic PDF... I hadn't wrote in a while and had little time to get this out so it's quite disjointed but maybe you have some time to read it - there should be footnotes on it but somehow it's lost sign of the times



6 HOURS AGO
14 NOTES
#VERONA
Love letters in Verona

37

**An Object Rejoins
the Flow of Time,
Is Time**



For Robert Smithson, art does not involve a wild destratification, but what we might call the development and maintenance of a “strategic zone,” a space of experimentation *between* the strata and the outside (in fact a place in which one might *encounter* the outside).

For Smithson art is the name for this encounter in which an object rejoins the flow of time it was always already a part of (but had been extracted from). Indeed all these objects and practices, these new monuments, might be located on that “seeping edge” between the actual and the virtual, which we might rephrase here as the coexistence of the pure past (and future) with the present, or simply a seeing of the object *as object*, and a seeing of the object *in process*, *as duration*.

Simon Sullivan, *Geophilosophy*

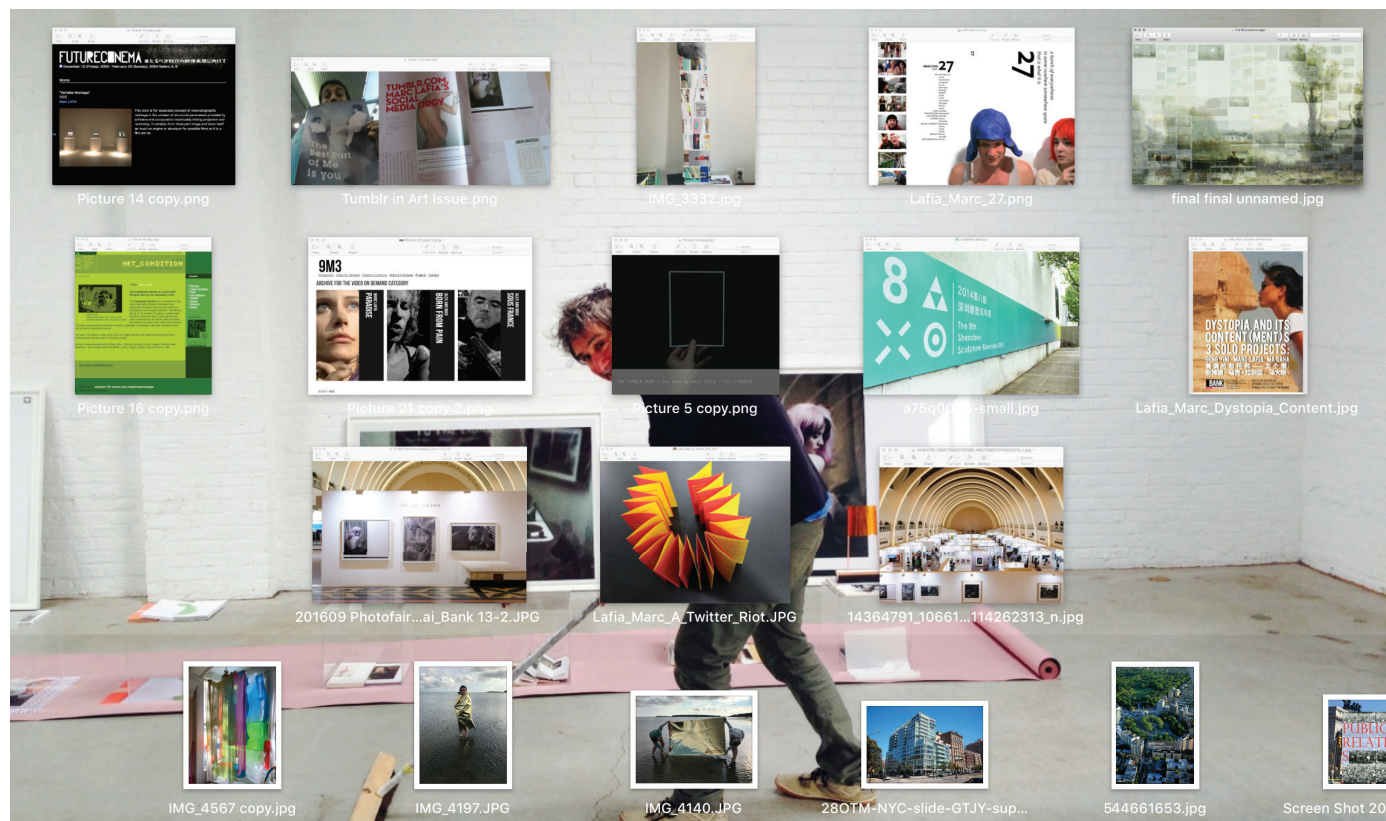
Any process implies a system, but not all systems imply process. What is systematic about art that reduces the arbitrary comes out as information, revealing an ends-means hookup. That is, there is about the work a particular kind of systematizing that process can imply. Common to the art in question is that it searches for a definite sort of system that is made part of the work. Insofar as the system is revealed, it is revealed as information rather than esthetics. Here is the issue stated so long ago by Duchamp: art making has to be based on terms other than those of the arbitrary, formalistic, tasteful arrangements of static forms. This was a plea as well to break the hermeticism of “fine art” and to let in the world on terms other than image depiction.

The two modes of systematizing employed by American art over the last half century have been briefly sketched. The materials/process approach tends to predominate now. American art, unlike American thought, has occasionally had a strong idealist bias, but the a priori has so far proved unnerving and uncomfortable tools for the American artist. To pursue a more material route was, in the late 1940s, to be up against the formalism of Cubism. Pollock was the first to beat his way out of this. But all art degenerates into formalism, as Pollock himself found out. The crisis of the formalistic is periodic and perpetual, and for art to renew itself, it must go outside itself, stop playing with the given forms and methods, and find a new way of making.

Robert Morris, *Some Notes on the Phenomenology of Making*, pp. 83–84

So it is not an object *there*, distinct from *us*, perfect without us—those would be the objects of Donald Judd. For Robert Morris, there are no objects without space, without perception, without interaction. In fact, place, space, form and their perception—our interaction with them—become the work of art. This clearly leads to art as a relation, and we can sense the move to relational aesthetics.

We get this in a very different way with Robert Smithson, with his dialectical conception of site and non-site, of here and there, both held simultaneously, even in the absence of the one. *Here* and *there*, in relational aesthetics becomes *you* and *me*, *between* you and me. And all that is me, all that is you and all that figures you and figures me (all of our cultural values “inscribed” on our body, in its learned perceptions). If Smithson gives a sweeping sense of entropy and time, the grandeur (really indifference) of non-human time, a deep sense of a material and atmospheric planet, a Gaia and cosmos, practitioners of relational aesthetics (using this term very openly) seemed interested, thoroughly or narrowly (not in a pejorative sense), in human relations, of sense-making, knowledge systems, social interactions, the limits and scope of human-to-human (or human-to-machine) relations.



Not forms or objects but formats.

"The originality of the group General Idea, formed in the early seventies, was to work with social formatting: corporations, television, magazines, advertising, fiction. 'In my view,' Phiiippe Parreno says, 'they were the first to think of the exhibition not in terms of forms or objects but of formats. Formats of representation, of reading the world. The question that my work raises might be the following: what are the tools that allow one to understand the world?'"

38

**Art a Format,
a Platform, a
Plane of Embodied
Sensate Being,
Voices Singing**

I see myself looking at art and art practices as very much a format itself and am interested in a performative problematization or elaboration of languages of material and form in art practices.

I believe in the capacity of art to create – through its form its own Truth. A Truth as opposed to information, objectivity, circumstance, context, conditions, correctness, historicism, documentation, opinion, journalism, criticism, morality.

Thomas Hirschhorn

Over 50 people from 35 different countries, currently living in Tel Aviv, Israel, were invited by Dana Levy and Marc Lafia to sing a song from their homeland. The result, *Sing to me and tell me your story*, is a multilingual collage, which by grouping the idiosyncratic experiences of the dispersed, unconnected immigrants, points to a potential for their political empowerment and self-assertion through song.

A first-person film, confessed and narrated by a subject. Singing is often done after funerals. In times of joy, it is very often an intensely personal expression or social ritual that expresses an emotion that cannot be expressed alone by words.

I admire Hirschhorn's engagement and his work's formal qualities, but I am also suspect of such Truth with a capital T. The long list of things that his Truth is opposed to is very much a good and positive description of the work he does. Under the format of art, his list above can be discussed and contested, enacted and performed. Just think of Rirkrit Tiravanija: art as a social practice.

In this sense, the conversation of form, abstraction, painting, the expanded field of sculpture, and embodiment is far away and long ago. But in fact it underlies and gives permission to much of contemporary art.

From object to embodiment to social and human relations. The medium of art is any and all forms of social discourse: sociality.

An embodiment into the self, as odd as that sounds, as embodiment is already into and unto the self's sensate, cognitive being. The artist asks for the embodied to be fully sensate: self-aware, not simply contemplative or distracted, but present to itself. Hence, Marina Abramović's *The Artist is Present*, an asking, in fact, of each of us to be present to ourselves, the situation, our surroundings.





39

To
"Speak
Another
Language"

When art loses its ties to the aristo and the mythic and begins the modernist trajectory from Manet on—from here on out—the very idea, the very project of art is open to be defined. At first, it turned on the issues of the picture plan and perception, which is the question of depiction, perspective, impressions, sense impression, the multiple. But this was still within the plastic space of the older media, painting and sculpture. Myth was first to be turned over with abstraction. And class concerns (that is, who or what is the subject, and for whom is the work made) also change, had changed already from Caravaggio to Vermeer, Manet, Toulouse-Latrec, Bonnard, and on and on and on.

What was an object that could be called art, be art—all that gets wrapped up in the readymade. The designated, what is art, is art not because I say it is so, but it *becomes* art for me, it *becomes* for others. It affirms and invites its designation and designation as such.

The function of art, as a question, was first raised by Marcel Duchamp. In fact it is Marcel Duchamp whom we can credit with giving art its own identity. (One can certainly see a tendency toward this self-identification of art beginning with Manet and Cézanne through to Cubism, but their works are timid and ambiguous by comparison with Duchamp's.) "Modern" art and the work before seemed connected by virtue of their morphology. Another way of putting it would be that art's "language" remained the same, but it was saying new things. The event that made conceivable the realization that it was possible to "speak another language" and still make sense in art was Marcel Duchamp's first unassisted Ready-made. With the unassisted Ready-made, art changed its focus from the form of the language to what was being said. Which means that it changed the nature of art from a question of morphology to a question of function. This change – one from "appearance" to "conception" – was the beginning of "modern" art and the beginning of conceptual art. All art (after Duchamp) is conceptual (in nature) because art only exists conceptually.

The "value" of particular artists after Duchamp can be weighed according to how much they questioned the nature of art; which is another way of saying "what they added to the conception of art" or what wasn't there before they started. Artists question the nature of art by presenting new propositions as to art's nature. And to do this one cannot concern oneself with the handed-down "language" of traditional art, as this activity is based on the assumption that there is only one way of framing art propositions. But the very stuff of art is indeed greatly related to "creating" new propositions.

Joseph Kosuth, *Art After Philosophy* (1969)

40

**Objects and
Situations,
Place,
Reception and
Embodiment**

I begin an investigation into the archeology of sculpture, of form, of objecthood, of the presence of the body, the performative. Do forms and shapes, color and texture, in and of themselves have affect of particular reception? Under the linguistic turn of the last 75 years, under the idea of constructivism, cultural relativity, could there be anything that form itself might communicate, might express?





Neurobiology asks the question of how visual perception can arouse the aesthetic emotion.

This raises a neurobiological challenge which can be summed up as follows: are there any arrangements of lines, forms and colors (or indeed of other visual attributes) and the relations between them which would adhere to neural laws of "mysterious necessity" and thus satisfy the "unknown and mysterious laws" of our perceptive system sufficiently to arouse the aesthetic emotion? More broadly, do such arrangements result in a pattern of activation in the perceptive areas that can, by some criterion or another, be said to correspond to an "aesthetic perception" and what is the relation, in neural terms, between an aesthetic perception and the "aesthetic emotion" that it arouses?

Semir Zeki, "Clive Bell's 'Significant Form' and the Neurobiology of Aesthetics"



41

Forms
of
Formlessness

Art is concerned with form. (Visual shape is a metaphor for conceptual form.) But in the course of the twentieth century, this very notion (*form*) has become suspect. This situation creates an interesting challenge for the visual arts: to find a form for formlessness, to show the form that has no form. Below we list some of the forms of formlessness that have been explored.

[Note that one may plausibly try to find the form of formlessness at the level of methods and procedures rather than at the level of individual objects. Then it gives rise to *process art* and *chance art*. Or one may give up altogether, and embrace *nothing* or *destruction*.]

dangle

tangle

jumble

litter

mound

heap

junk

foam

fluff

mud

dirt

fat

trash

goo/ooze/putty

mess

<http://www.radicalart.info/informe/>

42

The Art
Committee of the
Richard Meier
Grand Army Plaza
Building

I mentioned above I had decided, not unlike with my films, to have a show of the new works at my 125-year-old brownstone home in Brooklyn. It was titled *In What Language to Come* which I write about above. Jeannie Weissglass, an artist and gallerist, came to the opening. It was an excellent time. I asked Jeannie about her contact at Gallery 1 in the Richard Meier building at Grand Army Plaza, and she put in touch with Suzy Spence, the curator, who asked to see images of the work.

I sent her a PDF and she writes,

The presentation of your work went well, and we're interested in seeing it in person / the group art committee of about 5 members for consideration of a show in January.

With that, she asked to bring the building's art committee for a visit in early September.



A note here on Richard Meier On Prospect Park, The Gallery at 1GAP:

In 2009, a private collector conceived of a gallery space for fellow residents of the Richard Meier building in Brooklyn, On Prospect Park. Through the formation of an Art Committee, his vision developed into a participatory in-house art program. By mounting three large exhibitions a year, funded by the residents of the building, this unusual non-profit features the work of contemporary New York City artists. Exhibitions fill a series of rooms in the building's common areas on the ground floor, visible at street level from outside. For the curious passerby, a walk by the glass facades of the building reveals a full view of the dynamic conversation between Meier's architectural

design, the contemporary art on view, and the vibrant city and park life just beyond the glass.

The Gallery at 1GAP engages with an extended community of art enthusiasts by opening its doors for artist receptions, artist conversations, and special events, with the goal of contributing to the creative culture and energy of Brooklyn.

The gallery does three solo shows a year, each lasting four months.



So early September came, and I prepared the studio. The gallery committee consisted of eight people. Before I took them to the main room, I invited them upstairs for coffee and pastries, as I wanted to get a sense of them and go slowly. Over time I began to get a sense of each one of them, and the various things that interested them. That alone was quite enjoyable. After about 45 minutes or an hour, my sense was that they had much enjoyment and enthusiasm for the work.

The Meier art committee visit goes well and later that day I am invited to do a show. With the invitation of the Meier art committee for the show I spend time looking at the building and meet Suzy and the board to see the space.

GAP 1 at the Richard Meier Building

Richard Meier On Prospect Park, The Gallery at One Grand Army Plaza, Brooklyn



Three large rooms and windows—4000 square feet on the bottom floor, that's the space that I am given to work with.

It's a lot—a lot of space, and spaces, a white cube filled with light not unlike the museum spaces Richard Meier has built. It's a gallery space as well as a social space, and this intrigues me. Should I do another of my billboards as I did for Shenzhen or in Shanghai? As you can see above, they have seen all this new work and want this work. And I am curious how the work will inhabit the Meier space.



Space as Exhibition

What kind of subject - what kind of art for
a pure and dehistoricized space for a transhistorical subject.

I think its accurate, using the language in Benjamin Buchloh's on Thomas Hirschhorn,

The architects Herzog and de Meuron, for example, describe their understanding of the phenomenological aspects of Dan Graham's work precisely in terms of a universalized architectural abstraction, as the articulation of a pure and dehistoricized space for the embodiment of transhistorical subjects.

Language equally accurate to describe contemporary white cube museum and gallery spaces. Meier in fact has designed the Barcelona Museum of Contemporary Art, The High Museum, and The Arp Museum, along with the portfolio of living spaces that he has designed worldwide such as the Meier at Grand Army Plaza in Brooklyn, New York.



On the left edge of this aerial photograph about three-quarters of the way down is the Meier building. The building is set off of the circle of Grand Army Plaza, which was designed to open onto Prospect Park. Originally the grounds of the Grand Army Plaza was the site of the Battle of Long Island, the first battle of the American Revolution.

The Meier space again — “a pure and dehistoricized space for the embodiment of transhistorical subjects” seems to want to have no memory, or to be clear, clean, and pure. There is something of this in the space, a container of light, that I very much like. At the same time, there is a multi-generational response to form itself, taking its cues from the Mies van der Rohe.



The Barcelona Pavilion, an emblematic work of the Modern Movement, has been exhaustively studied and interpreted as well as having inspired the oeuvre of several generations of architects including Richard Meier. Mies van der Rohe’s originality in the use of materials lay not so much in novelty as in the ideal of modernity they expressed through the rigour of their geometry, the precision of the pieces and the clarity of their assembly.

<http://miesbcn.com/the-pavilion/>

This rigour of geometry and form, hall marks of modernity are precisely what comes into question in the sculptural practices from Pop Art to Post-Minimal sculpture, from ready made iconicity to phenomenological anti-form and the abstractions of process- and structure- determined practices.

From the moment of Fluxus and Pop (e.g. Claes Oldenburg, Allan Kaprow, and Robert Whitman) in the late Fifties and early Sixties to figures such as Michael Asher and Dan Graham at the end of that decade, approaches to sculpture asked specific questions about its sites and situations in the remnants of the former public sphere. Yet these artists were not merely involved in a critique of the discourses of exhibitions and the museum institution, but they actually contemplated the collective conditions governing the experience of objects and spaces under the visual regimes of late capitalism.

Benjamin Buchloh, *Detritus and Decrepitude: The Sculpture of Thomas Hirschhorn*

These issues that sculptors and sculpture have dealt with in response to modernity concerned me obliquely before the Meier show, as I had never expressed directly my interest in objects as situations, as events, as theatre; or the becoming object, or notional objects; layering and dispersion; precarity. These, as issues or approaches, stood against or contested the modern and its rationality. I proceeded with the object-situation as a given more and more in the works of *In What Language to Come*. Concerns of form and objecthood, apart from being within an ensemble of issues of space, embodiment, reception, and site specificity, became more intriguing for me.

The occasion of the Richard Meier building show has me quite taken with the realm of forms, this something new and distinct from formats, be they software or social formats. It is not just forms complete unto themselves (if such a thing can be), but also the form and its simultaneous disassembly and contestation.

Influenced by Le Corbusier, Alvar Aalto, Mies van der Rohe, Luis Barragán, Meier creates rational modernist forms with abundant natural light. Key to it all: the color white.

White is the ephemeral emblem of perpetual movement. White is always present but never the same, bright and rolling in the day, silver and effervescent under the full moon of New Year's Eve. Between the sea of consciousness and earth's vast materiality lies this ever-changing line of white. White is the light, the medium of understanding and transformative power..... If it is true that Ludwig Mies van der Rohe once said, "God is in the details," it might be possible to say of Richard Meier's architecture that God is in the numbers. More than any other contemporary architect, Meier has imposed a style that is almost invariably driven by grids and precisely calculated proportions.

<https://archcritik.wordpress.com/2015/08/18/richard-meier/>

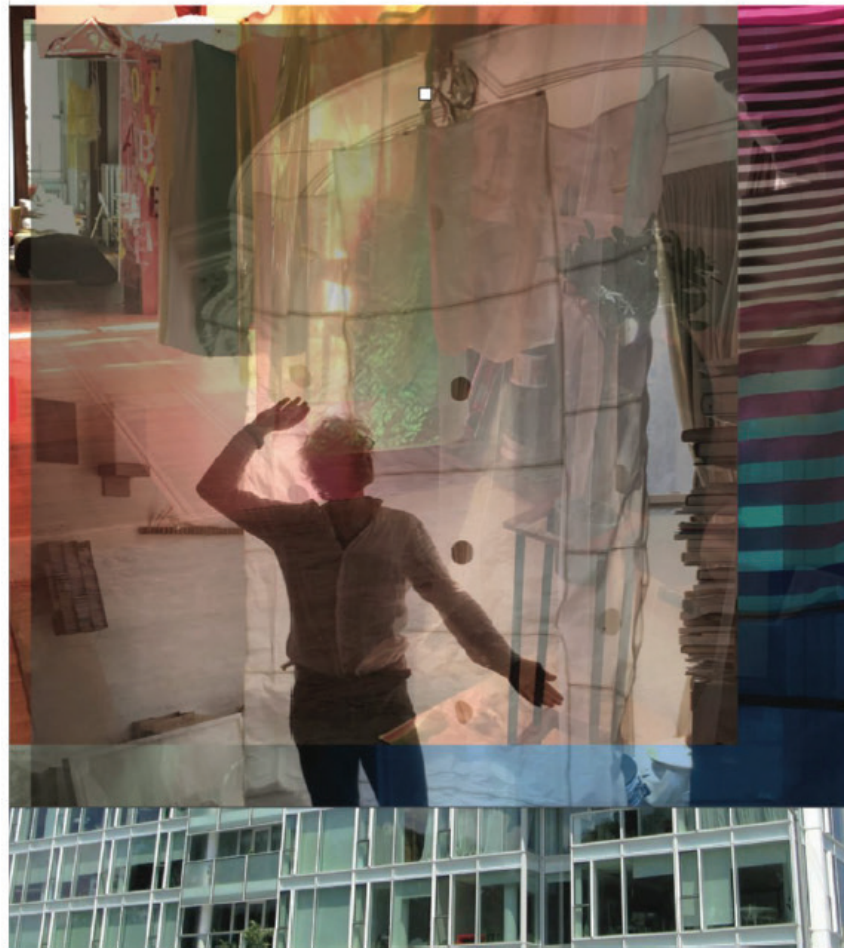
Richard Meier is known for his use of dynamic light and white. White. White. White. And light. Perfect.



Time: Opening reception, 2 p.m.–4 p.m.; Monday–Friday, 1 p.m.–6 p.m. or by appointment

—*Sarah Cascone*

Sunday, April 29–Wednesday, September 5



Installation composite of Marc Lafia's "Making Sense." Courtesy of the artist.

17. "[Marc Lafia: Making Sense](http://spenceprojects.com/inner/lafia.html)" (<http://spenceprojects.com/inner/lafia.html>)" at 1GAP Gallery

At first, Lafia's new exhibition looks like a sharp left turn from his previous work, which leveraged new media and interactive elements to foreground the ways in which digital culture alters our physical and mental self-conception. His latest body of work instead comes about through old-fashioned assemblage.

'The great buildings of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe are often thought of as temples of reason, odes to a pure and rational system of architecture. It was Mies, after all, who sought a universal Modernist style of absolute rigor and austerity, who struggled to boil architecture down to its essences.

The glass boxes that now sit with a thud in the midst of virtually every downtown are buildings designed by architects who saw the rational side of Mies and failed to understand the poetic one, who could not comprehend that what Mies considered simple and what real-estate developers considered simple were very different things.

<http://www.nytimes.com/1986/02/16/arts/architecture-view-his-buildings-have-the-simplicity-of-poetry.html?pagewanted=all>





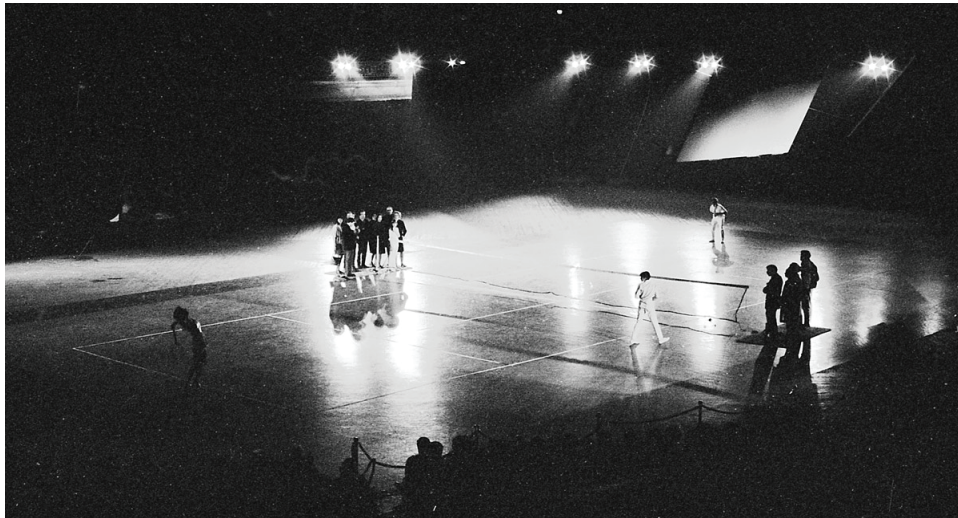
Richard Meier, Mies Van der Rohe and the purported all too clean transhistorical subject

We would be mistaken then to think of the work of Mies Van der Rohe as a clean, orderly and planar screen, a new surface, an architecture degree zero the once hard clean edge of the silver screen, now the computational screen that once reflected the image, in augmented or virtual reality, the dream of rationally, just like it was in cinema continues to be emotive, excessive, noisy, a passing or emittance of the sensual, the transitory, the appetite.

The BBC reports on the statue,

This dreamlike sensation was reinforced by the fact that there was nothing to see inside beyond the architecture itself, save for a single sculpture of a female nude – Alba, or Dawn, by the German artist George Kolbe – and the architect's new leather and chrome steel Barcelona chairs.

<http://www.bbc.com/culture/story/20130924-less-is-more-a-design-classic>



I like these two images together, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe Barcelona Pavillion and a performance at EAT.

And this from *The Guardian*,

The history of art and technology is a history of envy. The rival fields – famously characterised as *Two Cultures* by CP Snow – have long challenged, borrowed or stolen from each other. Each wants what the other has. Art desires technology's seeming omnipotence, its cold power, its cutting-edge materials and processes; technology wants art's creativity, its free thinking, its radical innovation. And yet in spite – or because – of this fraught relationship, art and technology have converged in many ways, whether in competition or collusion.

<https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2016/jan/27/robert-rauschenberg-electronic-tennis-match-art-tech-john-cage-9-evenings>

The open, variable, and iterative, the mutable, transposable, contextual, the score that is indeed a line of flight, the instruction set, the notational, chance, these notions changed forever sculpture and our sense of objects and presence.

Yet the emotive, wherein to dampen, or turn up, the register of the sensual and sensate is provence of the arts.

To “contest this architecture outright as a hegemonic ordering of spatial experience”

At the same time I am roused and piqued to ‘contest this architecture outright as a hegemonic ordering of spatial experience’. Why? Consider the site of the building of the plaza and ovoid that leads into the Prospect Park. Whereas Frederic Olmsted, designed space for an urban public greatly in need of open city space and a city receptive to such an effort, after 9.11 and the global war on terror, public space today in New York and other cities is highly policed and surveilled.

Ideas here include

- ¶ a pop up rehab center in the lobby
- ¶ put inside the floor to ceiling windows chain link fence
- ¶ put surveillance cameras everywhere possible in and around the building and have them play stacks of monitor to occlude viewing.

and why do this, some punk, antiauthoritarian gesture, some messianic calling for the end of time, some resentment against the perfectly ordered, the sterile, the clean.

Asked “Why has white been such a presence in your work?,” Richard Meier answers,

Whiteness allows the architectural ideas to be understood most clearly—the difference between opacity and transparency, solid and void, structure and surface. These things are more perceptible in a white environment. They have a greater clarity.

As opposed to this ‘clarity’; foundational to me was William Burroughs, the cut-up, chance, appropriation, surprised recognition, the body. Cage and silence, the given, what’s around, post colonial theory and philosophy, you might say, all of it post psychedelic, or rather, open, permeable, transitory, messy, dirty, fucked up.

43

**Forms
and
Objects:
An Inventory
of Effects**

Form, not surfaces, not form factors as in industrial design, not formats, but volume, mass, perhaps even ideal forms. What might this be? And what of Morphologies, Geologies, Topographies? Not the exhibition as a script, as notional, as instructions, as Eternal Sunshine, as instructing bodies of architecture, as formatting; no, forms inside forms, things, stuff, space, forms, monoliths, objects.

object

figure

space

bodies

objecthood

just what kind of object what kind of material material itself

what does this itself mean?

vitrine, shrine, monolith, serial structure

tactility and shapes

shaping light, shaping material

shaping the viewer

"display" to distinguished from a putative tradition or genre of

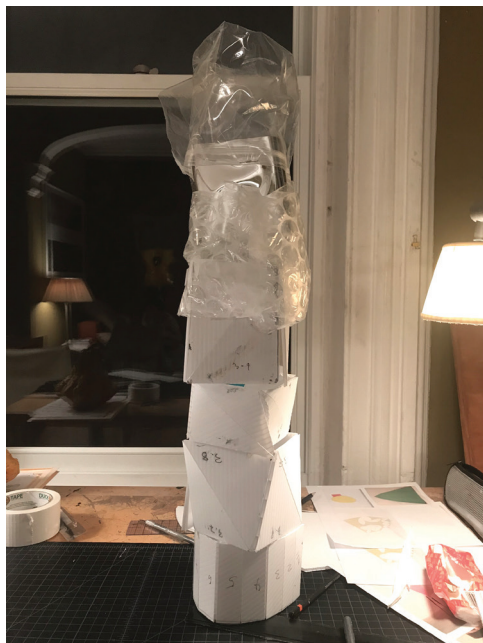
"installation" ala hirschhorn



I want to see this stone column in the glass vitrine window of the Meier building.



So different, these two shapes. I think of both of them as forms, not quite objects.



These two are objects, and while the one on the left, a Razor scooter with various masses on top of it, is very narrative, so the one on the right is equally narrative. Interesting how form becomes an object becomes a narrative.

An Inventory of Effects

Let's take a step back, away from three-dimensional objects, forms, mass, volume, bodies in space, spaces, space and presence itself (James Turrell and Robert Irwin) and return for a moment to regimes of writing, representation and images and, from there, objects, light, embodiment, space and exhibition specificity.

With every new release of work, there needs to be a rallying cry, a name, a signifier, around which the work can retrospectively be given agency, can be introduced to the world so that it can be understood. It can't simply be a multiplicity; it must have a point of critique, a point of being, a set of problems that it is weighing in on. It must, like everything, be an argument.

I ask myself, what is the space that I can open, that can be found? One that has intrigued me in reading the essays of Robert Morris along with interviews with Thomas Hirschhorn is the space of the body. Being between and within one's body and social bodies, between the dance of life, being present to it and the hard facts on the ground in the Gramscian sense of bodies and politics. How space shapes and disciplines the body. How software does that, how software disembodies the body, estranges it from the full amplitude of its movements of its sensate body, time reduced, focused, narrowed into screen time. How the interaction with the *you* that is played back to you from the data collected on you constructs you. How by class, by money, by state power, by global circuits and ideology, we are shaped and marked, and how art as display can, in Hirschhorn's sense, bring us to closer to knowing, enduring, how in Morris's sense things can be things, not simply anesthetized things, which we call art, but how in reference to the space opened by Robert Morris we can talk about the expanded field of art that brings us, present, to ourselves and life.

There is something between the two of them. But how to name it? What is this rallying cry? Perhaps it is not to rally at all, not to cry, but more akin to a philosophy held dear by Ad Reinhardt: art as the liberation from the self, and from the shifting flux of the everyday world.

I prefer the "and . . . and . . . and" model to the banality of duality.

(Carsten Holler)

I am always making lists and enumerations of various tropes, strategies, instructions, operations, limits, inventories of effects.

1. Seeing as writing, writing to see

writing on images to see them, writing, drawing, coloring, as seeing, to see with the hand, to touch is to see, to feel is sight (hence the uncanniness of mechanical seeing, even of search, such algorithms, don't see with feeling, don't read with context, with biography)

i keep playing with a stylus drawing over photographs, photographs or images of things on the computer screen, that i then make color lines on them or rephotograph them with color over lays. the selection of images is what i come upon. i suppose these have been of different types, thinking about it.

here is a list

- the iPhone or photo apps see versions of an image, they see imaging, there is no image in front of these cameras.*

- tape recorders (i am always interested in memory devices, even distributed ones, like a blockchain)*

- art works (aa of later bas jan ader, sol lewitt, broodthaers, i return to these figures again and again)*

- news images (so often are invisible to see, even the most dramatic or compelling photographs. to see them i draw onto top of them, so as to touch them, these images include refugee camps, natural disasters, california fires, et..)*

why do they attract me

- i am always interested in recording devices, in apps or overlays of visual instrumentation*

- i am interested in instructions*

- interested in broodthaers use of the figure to demark and delineate the surface of of screen space, the screen as a surface, he gets this from Mallard.*

- the screen as surveillance*

- the optics of seeing*

the plastic overlay on screen and the drawing and double exposure

- again image reading image, warhol as a designer does this most beautifully and succinctly using mass media and iconic images and representation them through select color application. the underlying image we know, but see again with this process. this is the nature of the uncanny, you know it but you don't.*

sometimes it's just the line of the drawing that i like, the colors.

other times i think there has to be something more. its as if i am doodling, just making doodles.

there is something in the technique i like - but have yet to realize. maybe it's because in the end, it's a small image on instagram. and there they are -just another image - and they can't be seen. i so much want to print some these very big, scan than print.

there is something between photography and drawing, imaging and illustrating, seeing with a pen, seeing as writing

- plastic on top of photos

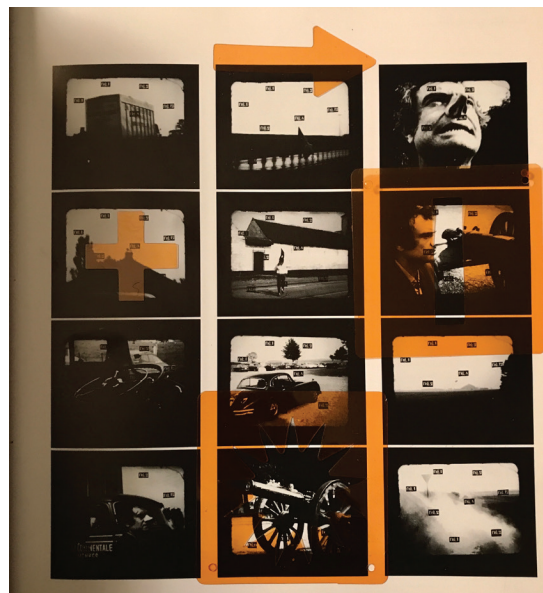
- writing on top of photos

- plastic in front of white gloves

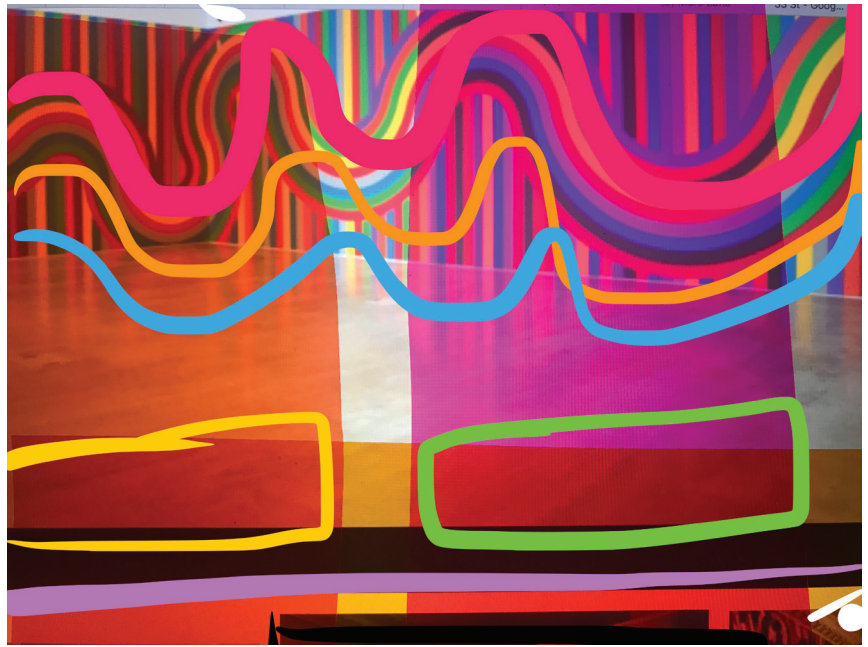
- plastic on photographs, abu gray, hurricanes, Jan bas Adler.

- with writing on phone

- writing on photographs, why, what photos, what to show through the writing, what does it enhance, displace, see specifically



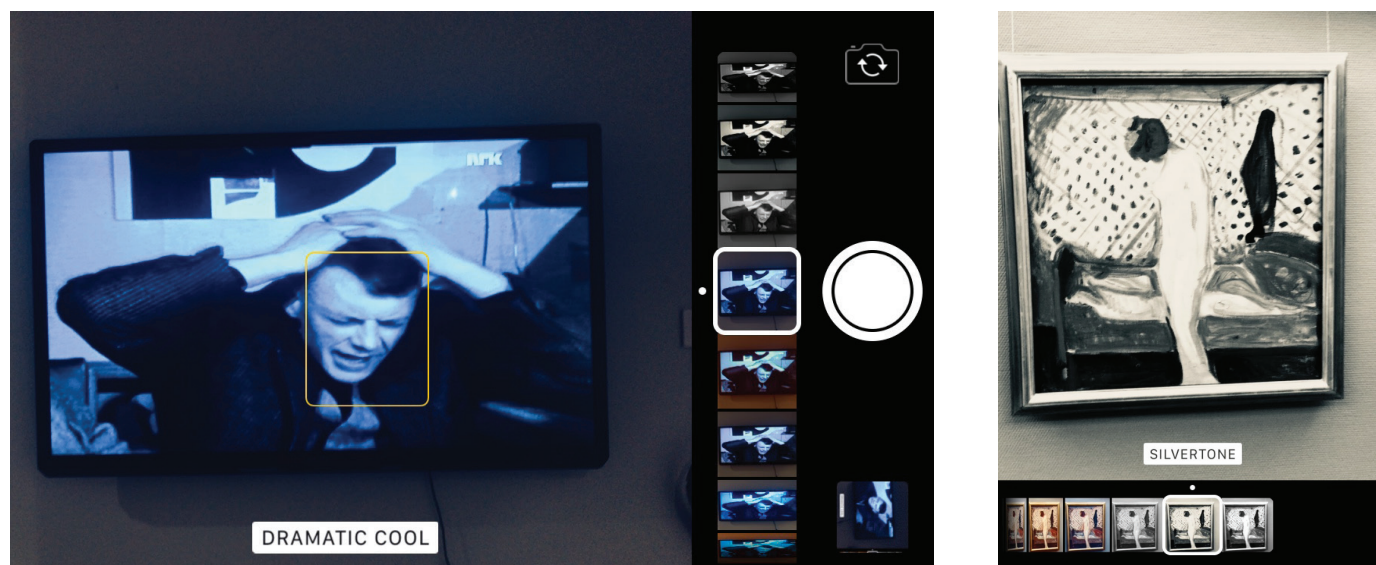
Broodthaers's genius, following Mallarme, to see the page, the surface of the page, as a series of figures, or rather spaces designated rhetorically as figures, turning language and images into scenes and territories within demarcated shape.







It's only with the filter that I can see: this is why Warhol's treatment of images outlasts the underlying originals. As if saying: *now, you can see this picture*.



Seeing the apparatus of seeing, the imaging tool set that images.



Many of the sheer fabric works with zippers I place over earlier works, like this large water color. There is something about concealment, wrapping, covering, obscuring that make us desire to see more.

Under the veil, obscuring what is seen, at the same time bringing touch to sight.



Light sensitive, gravity sensitive, opacity and transparency, sheer and opaque, the sense of touch brought to illumination.

2. Writing on the surface of the Earth

If writing, even writing with a camera, is producing a kind of writing on a surface, writing that is surface, writing or marking that gives forth a sign to another sign, language, making language, letters just another material or a material only, a surface only, a thing amongst things, then Mylar, reflectively, is a form and a surface that continually pleats both itself and the displacement of what it mirrors in its environment. Shaped to the body or taken up by wind or movement, Mylar, with its underlying mirror surface, is always itself a something else. This itself and something else is what we so often forget about. We forget that words on paper are on paper and are letter forms, makings or the striking of a keyword of Helvetica, this becomes invisible to us as we simply get on with the reading of the words. There is no paper, no letters. Of course, when we see languages we don't read, we don't understand, we again see letter forms or characters as in Chinese or Japanese. As things, materials, objects, ideas become invisible to us; we want to see them again, as for the first time. The fabric pieces, the Mylar, the plastic overlays help me see anew

During the summer, I took square-meter sheets of Mylar, gold and silver, along with plastic underside. I had my two children wear the Mylar and walk into and along the shore of the bay. The Mylar in a photograph becomes fixed and very sculptural in appearance. The image is flat but it alludes to dimension. Sculpture is that thing itself. But what kind of thing? And why?

I took smaller plastic sheets onto trains, looking out the window and photographing along the ride.

Here is a list of these photos:

- ¶ Mylar reflections of water and light
- ¶ kids wearing the Mylar, seeing its folds
- ¶ Mylar in front of shed with floating balls
- ¶ plastic in front of ocean
- ¶ plastic on train passing industrial suburban sites
- ¶ plastic passing trees

In all of these the filter is in front of the camera, it's not post production. we see and read the world through our cultural filters, our technical instruments and again here i am interested in the seeing of seeing. there is also a sense of the artifice of man's instruments, the hazard of them, the hazard of the human endeavor, the sense of it as a dead end, as terminal, as sick, as alien, as estranged. now i don't think one will really get that in these pictures, these photographs, but i certainly had that feeling, that on the other side of my vision, of me, of us, of this, on the other side of this plastic all this human made stuff, this boardwalk, these small groups of people, here and here, and these crowds, crowding, and this hot concrete, this shop, and this noisy shop, and stores and more shops and blocks of stores and cars and phones and people, all of it, this train depot, this desolate suburb, this teeming city, all of it, gone, already gone, and this light, and wind and rain and sea and clouds, just going on, on and on and on, and the whole human endeavor having become a stranger to itself, alluding itself, running and running and filling itself up, on this and that, and more of this and more of that, and more, and more and more, behind that plastic, behind that door of time, that sheet of time, gone, windswept, ruined, already ruined, so far away, me dissociated from it, from them, from me, from us, from all of it, a cloud passing like a shadow.



Here, I want to specifically situate space, the sun, sky and atmosphere as if under a bubble, the human bubble of populations and knowledge. More than relating artwork to a location, to a site specificity, I want to locate the site as specific, I want to see the specificity of this place, this earth, this planet, this ocean and these two people holding up a filter to it. We, then, are the work of art situated by our planet. A radically different idea.



3. Body Form Being

*a body inhabiting a reflective surface
the surface reflection resulting in inversions of sky, land,
earth, heaven... left, right, etc. silver and gold foil shape to
make form*

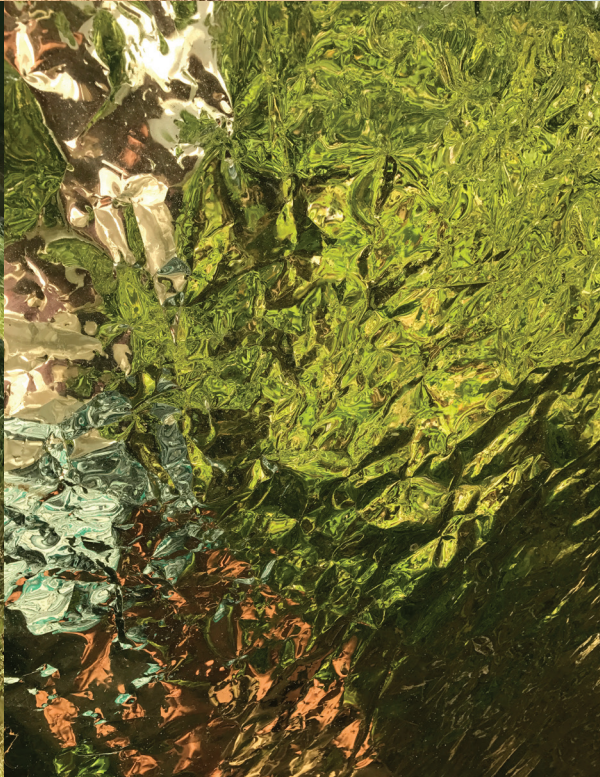
the body and its armor

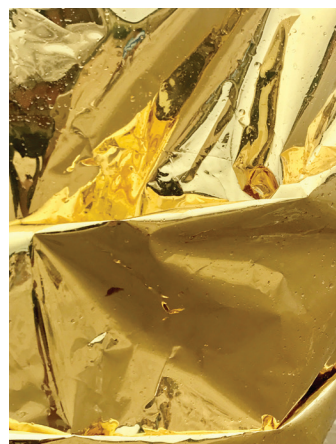
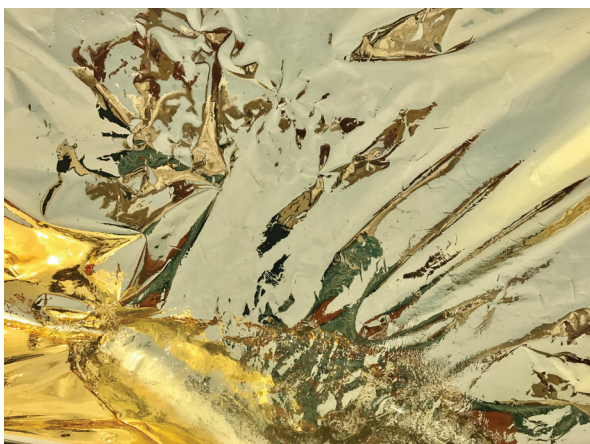
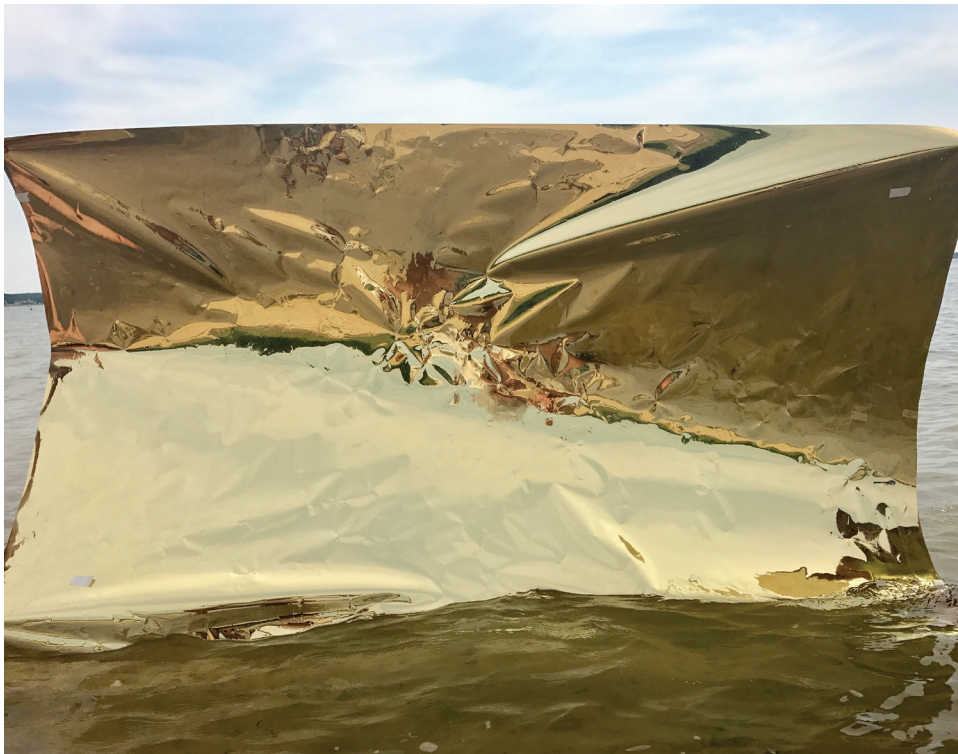
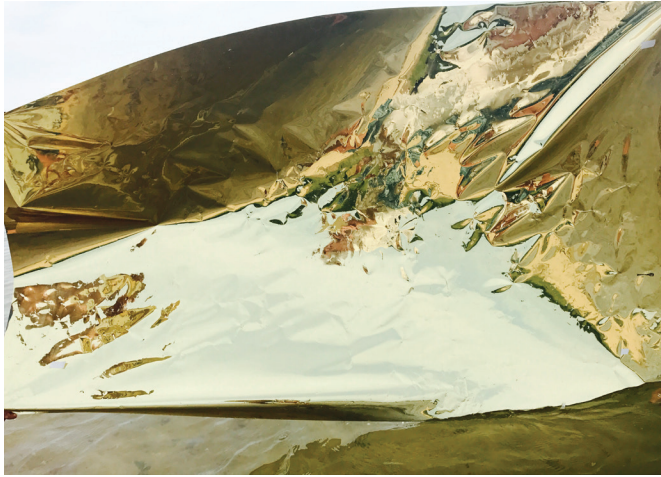
the shaping body

the body, agile form, making new forms, transitory forms













Mylar gives me this uncanny feeling of *The Matrix* or being in a Philip K. Dick novel. What is reflected in the Mylar, in the silver and gold, is a presence there and not there, there *but* not there. It's as if I can walk into this other world. At the same time, it suggests I am in the world of Mylar. The sea and sky is that world. I can't pierce it.

"Incidents of Mirror-Travel in the Yucatan" (1969). The mirrors reflected and refracted the surrounding environs, displacing the solidity of the landscape and shattering its forms. Part *Earthwork* and part image, the displacements contemplate temporality; while the mirror records the passage of time, its photograph suspends time.

Smithson began making the *Mirror Displacement* series shortly after his *Site/Non-Site* works. He described the difference between the two kinds of work:

In other *Non-sites*, the container was rigid, the material amorphous. In this case, the container is amorphous, the mirror is the rigid thing.

As in the *Site* series, Smithson was preoccupied with the way material or another site might be represented; might the materials in the *Displacement* be thought to "mirror" their presence elsewhere?

4. Sculpture consists almost exclusively of form but what of drawing and line

Whilst drawing and painting consists of the elements of line, colour, texture, space, scale, and format as well as form, sculpture consists almost exclusively of form. Now, I begin to look more closely at what the sculptor is doing, how she or he takes on this extraordinary expanse of form, or what is considered form.

Mirrors and cameras each displace one plane of reality and place it on another. It is all at once: the camera absorbing light and the mirror refracting light.

Drawing, on the other hand, is built up, line by line.



Clearer distinctions between sculpture's essentially tactile nature and the optical sensibilities involved in painting need to be made. For unlike paintings, which are always lit in an optimum way, sculpture undergoes changes by the incidence of light.

(Robert Morris)

I buy more materials: plastic, fabric, Mylar, and latex. I want to find more dimensionality, more depth in the works, more crunchiness — so, more layering.

Surveying the Meier building, I could see one corner where the two high ceiling windows meet at an inset angle where I could hang light scrims in such a way as to make a vitrine, something like 6 feet wide \times 2 feet deep \times 10 feet high.

I put four of the lollipops or my Pierre Hermé infinities up in the studio between two pieces of string suspended across the room, hanging the sheets perpendicular to each other so they form a rectangular transparent vitrine suspended in air.



Now, for the first time, there was an enclosed space. There was volume, mass. An inside and an outside.



The inside of this space, this plastic fabric scrim now a virtine, gives space an interiority, creates an enclosure, and has dimension itself. This was form. Not an image, not simply an object, but form. Not quite a solid form, but a form that inhabits space in the round. The interior, is what, air.

6. I begin to investigate, form, solidity, sculpture, three dimensional objects, softness



Haus Rucker

A friend of mine told me about Haus Rucker and their work with pneumatics. Pressurized air making solid what it soft or collapsable.

I have this desire to place things, objects in my soft vitrines, in this enclosed case, in space not as space or mass or void or volume, but vitrine as theater for an object in the round. In these soft vitrines, the top and bottom are open—perhaps it's more like a shaft, without top, without bottom. Nevertheless, this enclosure, this depth, this void, this vacuum, this walled-in space in its emptiness calls to me to be filled. I suppose, I just don't know what it is in and of itself.

Yes, this “in and of itself” I so wanted now stares me down. It stands defiant, without me, inconsiderate of me, content alone. This may be why we long for narrative, because it tells us what it is; it is without enigma, as narrative reveals in human terms, whereas form is. Form simply is.



7. An object, a form, not about something but something in and of itself

I think I'm having a hard time saying that there is something, either of the figure or narrative or story that I can locate in the work. Something that was very much in the films, not so much in the photographs, but yes in the *Chatroulette* series and others, in the history pictures and *Eternal Sunshine* show at the Minsheng.

I don't think it's a matter of saying something, but rather of looking at something. The difference in looking at something is that something is already there. I simply need to present it for it to be seen. It's uncanny, this that is.

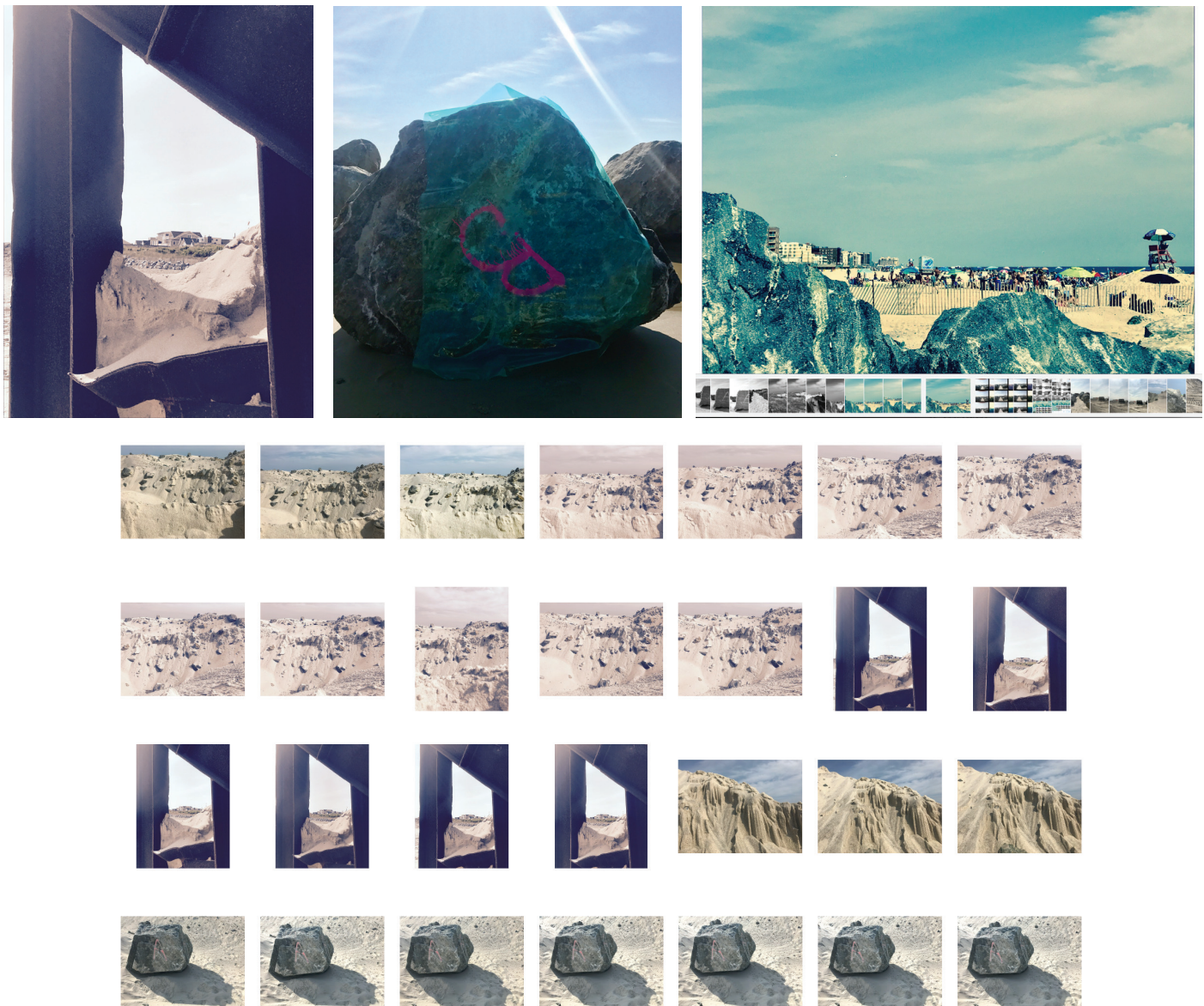
Saying something is more like constructing, illustrating, building—but aren't I already constructing and building with all these fabric and plastic works? Then, it must be the figure, the missing figure and why the Gilbert Garcin photographs captured me immediately. And yet, at the same time, why the Smithson has such pull when there is no figure, there is no hand to see. Of course, there is Smithson's figure of time and it "summons forth a new earth, (not necessarily) a new people." In fact, it is a world without people. It is an earth on the other side of the Anthropocene. Smithson accelerates time forward, meaning that he slows down time. He gives us slow time. He posits time as a crevice, each little thing having its own time, each everything alone in time, taking up space that is time, time indifferent, time that kills you, time indifferent to you and me. A world without you and me. Whereas the Garcin photographs, pleasing and playful, put you and me on centerstage.

So Smithson and form, and David Hockney and images, or, more precisely, depiction. Hockney will always remind us of how we delight in seeing images, images of others, images of the natural. There is always this social or human, if not sentimental, feeling in Hockney that affirms the body, social bodies, friendships, the human project, the human being's perception distinct from technologies. His argument against photography is that it does not capture the complexity of seeing and perception that humans possess. Humans don't look with a fixity that cameras do; they build up an image by looking about, here and there at something, the eye continually moving closer, then further. Looking at, let's say, another face, up close, moving from the eyes, the eyelids, perhaps a freckle on the nose, oh the nose, the tip of it, the lips, lips, the nape of the neck, hair falling on the neck, then away from this face to the light on the wall, back at the face, the eyelashes, the colored flecks in the eye, the skin, never quite the whole of it. Human perception is complex, round if you like, here and there, never all at once, never straight on and fixed, never seeing like a lens, never seeing the seeing of photographs.

For Hockney, the hand is seeing when it draws, building up the image, one

mark after another, looking and looking again. He wants the same thing in photography. Not to see all at once, as in releasing the shutter and there it is, the whole of it, but to see in duration, in an accumulation of time. He found this in his photo collages. Smithson, early on, says in various interviews that he got rid of all that, all that human literary mythic longing redemptive stuff. Recall the early Smithson drawings are of the stigmata of Christ and, though he got rid of all the literary and mythic, he would say that the form of the spiral embodies the mythological idea of death, blood, wine, red . . . quotations from literature, science, and art, but refusing a never-again achievable unity.

The world is broken for Smithson, as it is for J. G. Ballard, never to be righted. He becomes interested in evoking geologic time. Like Rothko, he tires of such “self-expression.” He tires of the human hubris of commanding and commandeering the world. No. No. No, he says, *This, this that you call world, sure, why not, go on, but seriously.*



8. Objecthood, the object condition

"Art" and "objecthood" were essentially two opposing forces. The literalists (Judd and Morris) were guilty of creating what Fried called "objecthood." In "art," the objects employed to construct the work were autonomous entities, disconnected from the surrounding world. In "objecthood" – roughly defined as the antithesis of, or objection to, art – the objects worked together to form one large object, but achieved nothing more than emphasizing that the result was, in the end, just an object.

In his 1967 essay "Art and Objecthood", Fried posited that Minimalism (what he referred to as "literalism") was compromising the quality of art because such technique was too literal in its meaning, too theatrical, and ultimately an impure practice. In the essay he wrote, "...the literalist espousal of objecthood amounts to nothing other than a plea for a new genre of theatre; and theatre is now the negation of art."

Fried objected to the work of Minimalist sculptors like Donald Judd, Sol LeWitt and Dan Flavin, because of their clear love for the fundamental materiality of the work, which resulted in an interactive experience for the viewer. This was, according to Fried, a form of mixed media, in which art and theater commingled to the point where the work ceased to be art, and ultimately was revealed to be merely an object. This "theatricality" in Minimalist sculpture, Fried believed, relegated the work of the literalists to the realm of "anti-art." Such installations, as they eventually became, failed to achieve purity because they failed to properly distinguish between the art and the object.

(Justin Wolf, <http://www.theartstory.org/critic-fried-michael.htm>)

I was to be in Manhattan for an appointment in the morning and planned to go to Mood Fabric after to look at felt, which I did. There are various thicknesses of felt, up to 4 millimeters. Felt is wool and/or a combination of acrylic. Taking out a grey roll amongst hundreds, running my hands over it and looking at its weight, its color next to varied deep blacks, looking and sensing wool and felt and its foldings, it had no pull for me, no allure. Most of the top floor of the shop is comprised of varied wools and cashmere. But, in one corner, next to the neoprene, there were various rolls of pleather. From the electric sea green, orange, hot pink, watermelon, bubblegum, the colors and crinkly finishes were irresistible. Many of them from Marc Jacobs's new line of women's handbags and raincoats.

These materials are not transparent, not at all, but the finishes make them seem more like fiberglass or something polished. Once I lined up the rolls of colors and textures I liked, I sensed that I could not drape them, I would not, I would form them into vitrines, but ones you could not look in to. Just in case, I

bought netted material thinking I would mix and match the two, so there was this play between opacity and transparency.

Once at home, I put them up on the string lines in the studio. Each vitrine with four sides, each a different color, a different surface. Immediately, there was something there, something floating, something intriguing, colorful and volumetric. Volume and mass are entirely new to me, though the work *In What Language to Come* had certainly dimension, not quite three-dimensional but a kind of thin volume. Here, there is mass and volume, objecthood.

Now, I had four of these vitrines, two transparent and two opaque, up in the middle of the studio, hovering in space. The two closed ones were sort of like soft Donald Judd, or more Mike Kelley. Formally, this was something new and not a representation. But what are they exactly? What is the argument they make? What do they say? If seeing, my seeing, has always been a way of reading the world, taking up its signs? Here was a presence, a kind of enigma, a kind of soft Stonehenge.

This thingness, this object condition, this objecthood, puts me in relation to it and me, as this thing apart, and this thing apart, this thingness there is quite interesting in a world of virtual things. This literal object, this non-art thing that Fried criticized, is to me precisely the thing or experience of art, not necessarily the object of art but the experience. This confounds and unnerves me.

Without a figure inside, these vitrines become a solid, become a thing, a presence, and as a thing, its presence has or suggests—what exactly? There is something to abstract things that relate to our sensuous being, to our sensuous memory. Not in terms of remembering, but we relate to them as things in this world, things of this world.

And what is this, I ask myself. I think it is as Merleau-Ponty elucidates which is us physically moving our bodies through space and perceiving our own body before us which is how we establish and differentiate the world.

(Tony Gibart, <http://csmt.uchicago.edu/glossary2004/objecthood.htm>)

In this sense, Fried reads this rightly in the sense of such objects being theatre, us being actively beheld as much as beholding.

Now, I don't know what to do exactly with these. I certainly don't want to fill them up with air, to stitch them together. Or do I?



9. Theatre, Narrative, Unfolding Time

There is always a pull in me for theatre, narrative, unfolding in time—this, I think, is what interests me in layering, continually reshaping these pieces, folding this way and that. And this everything that Michael Fried argues against.

Later that night, in the dark, looking from the middle room into the room of vitrines and the two large vertical windows, I watched the shifting colored light of the crosswalk side pulse red, then remain, then pulse again, again, and go to white. The lighting made the glove in the front lollipop vitrine seem to float like a hologram.

I could immediately see a set piece, a tableau, of two suggested tall rectangular frames (windows) or simply two colored scrim fabric pieces hanging, tall, apart from each other, with a video projection in the background, a video projection of:

- ¶ street with crosswalk off to the side—see time-lapse video
- ¶ trees, landscape in the day time
- ¶ alien landscape

With each of these background videos playing, vitrines and solid shapes float and hover in the foreground. The whole thing is a kind of cinema-objecthood.

The vitrines can go from being sort of shrouds in darkness with objects floating inside to full-on lighting of shapes.

Somewhere between a tableau, a set, a narrative of objects and moving

image, and something more stripped-down, an atmosphere, an ambience.

So, what to do now? For Meier, there can be no video in relation to the vitrines and scrims. But there is so much natural light and window space that, behind the high window space, with glass box after glass box, there is already a sense from the outside of looking into a vitrine. A set sectioned off by a series of rectangular apertures.

Install, then, not simply as objects, but as an ensemble.

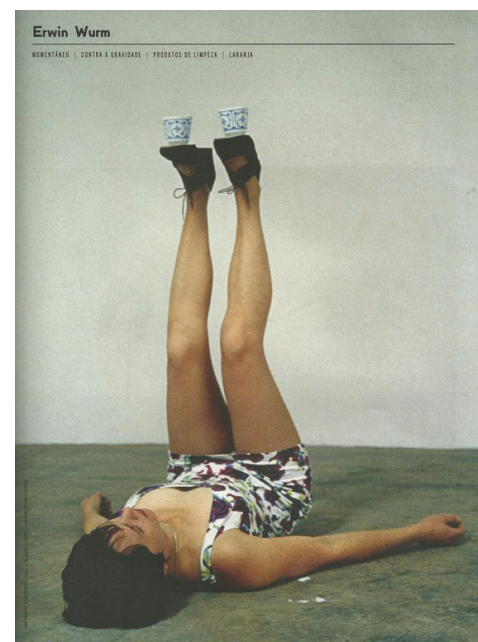


10. Ah, the body itself as object, as mass, as weight, collapsing, folding, finding its limit



Bruce McLean, *Pose Work for Plinths* 1971

Fabric is a kind of body, like the human body, that can be shape, whose weight in time moves it about, this way and that way. Perhaps that's why we are drawn to fabrics and at the same time feel a discomfort that they can be art, because they are so very vulnerable, can fall apart so easily.



Erwin Wurm

The beauty here is that we are one with the object, plinth and alongside with, commingling with, a true assemblage, a sculpture machine.



11. Everything that exists in Space also exists in Time

Yves Klein's day in Paris as a work of art is less an exuberant gesture than the presentation of an event that is impossible to perceive completely. Mere perception becomes a metaphor for cognition. The conceptual, categorical ambiguities of

the new art stand in sharp contrast to its direct occupation of space or specific demonstration of physical laws.

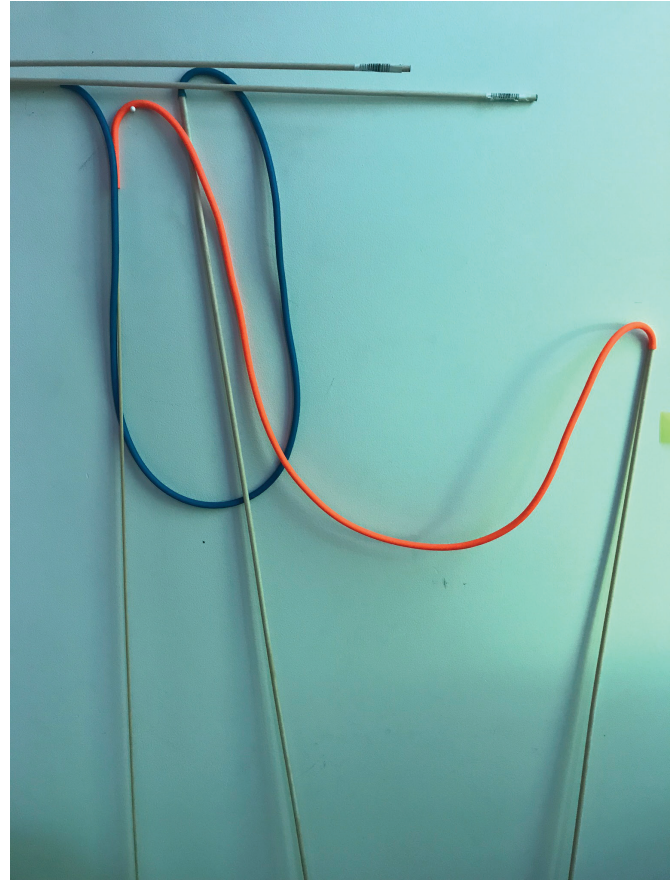
The most fundamental law of nature is that everything that exists in space also exists in time; artists today work with that knowledge in unforeseen ways. A Bill Bollinger rope piece does not change from day to day; indeed, its fixedness, its tension as it stretches between two anchoring bolts, is its very point. But what happens to it when it is disassembled? Does it still exist? If so, does it exist as rope, as potential art, or as art? Its installation is made synonymous with its existence, whereas a painting or fixed-form sculpture, no matter how radical its aesthetic, does not literally cease to be when it is in storage. The ontological instability of the Bollinger piece introduces, on the psychological plane, an experience of anxiety about being, which has been the chief subject of philosophy since Descartes. Consciousness as proof of existence is translated in esthetic terms: conception as method of creation. . . .

What is happening to form is what happened to order when it was subjected to chance by Duchamp, Arp, and others; it proves capable of apparently infinite extension. (It is significant that several of the new artists use flexible or extendable materials like rubber. The interaction between time and material also determines the artists' continuing interest in "common," "non-art" materials—cloth, plastic, dirt and organic matter, industrial flocking.

These things are mutable, perishable, sensitive to manipulation to a degree that more usual materials like stone and wood are not. Several years ago Rauschenberg said: "I try to act in the gap between art and life," for that gap continues to narrow. Art has been veritably invaded by life, if life means flux, change, chance, time, unpredictability.

Sometimes the only difference between the two is sheer consciousness, the awareness that what seemed to be a stain on the wall is in fact a work of art. Or a trench in the snow, or a pile of scraps, or a hole in the wall, or a hole in the desert. After all, if a de Kooning painting is the record of a series of acts, why not act directly upon the world by cutting a three-mile-long swath in the snow, as Denis Oppenheim has done? (Robert Smithson has developed the dialectic between site and work of art to a high degree of wit and complexity. Smithson's "non-sites," consisting of photographs, maps, and piles of rocks or dirt in his handsome bins, document his particular version of industrial archaeology for the gallery audience. Both his direct use of the landscape and his system of documentation implicate him centrally in the new directions of art.)

(Harald Szeeman, *Live in your Head When Attitudes Become Form*)



12. The vitrine is akin to putting things in quotation marks

Perhaps the vitrine is akin to putting things in quotation marks. It sets off an irony. It is there and not there. It is safely there, at a remove. Indeed, it is theatre. This is, I think, quite different when used by the artists of the '60s and '70s and when used by those of the '80s and '90s.

The vitrine is used via Hirst to evoke invisible elements such as germs, heat, scents and sounds. Beuys used them to house his own relics.

the symbolic life of the container form

-the reliquary and its sacred and ritual status (ritual as opposed to happening)

-the vitrine and its liberating disenchantment with the religious vision and in presenting a scientific and consumer

-the empty container of the dehumanized commodity

-disaffiliated negation

*cultivating an experience of desire and anxiety for its
beholder exciting a sense of movement from one side of its glass
boundary to the other
enclosure cocoon coffin*



Inside letter forms, the body surrounded by language. An invisible vitrine.

13. Topological space

- a dynamical theory of physical phenomena
- topology, the science of properties of spaces and figures that remain unchanged under continuous deformation
- differential or topological manifold
- all processes are structured, and that the structure of the realm of those structures, the virtual, can itself be explicated



A more rigorously analytical reading of the history of modernist sculpture would have to acknowledge that most of its seemingly eternal paradigms, which had been valid to some extent in late nineteenth-century sculpture (i.e., the representation of individual, anthropomorphic, wholistic bodies in space, made of inert but lasting, if not eternal, matter and imbued with illusionary moments of spurious life), had been definitely abolished by 1913. Tatlin's corner- counter relief and his subsequent *Monument for the Third International* and Duchamp's "ready- mades," both springing off the height of Synthetic Cubism, constitute since then the extremes of an axis on which sculpture has been resting ever since (knowingly or not): the dialectics of sculpture between functioning as a model for the aesthetic production of reality (e.g., architecture and design) or serving as a model investigating and contemplating the reality of aesthetic production (the ready-made, the allegory). Or, more precisely: architecture on the one hand and epistemological model on the other are the two poles toward which relevant sculpture since then has tended to develop, each implying the eventual dissolution of its own discourse as sculpture.

This ambiguous transition of the discipline had been sensed as early as 1903 by the conservative poet Rilke in his Rodin study, but of course his sense was conveyed in a tone of deploration and lament as the withering artistic category was indicative of vanish-ing privileges and esoteric experiences, which he perceived as being incorporated in the wholistic, autonomous art object:

Sculpture was a separate thing, as was the easel picture, but it did not require a wall like the picture. It did not even need a roof. It was an object that could exist for itself alone, and it was well to give it entirely the character of a complete thing about which one could walk, and which one could look at from all sides. And yet it had to distinguish itself somehow from other things, the ordinary things which everyone could touch.

The threshold between symbolic space and actual space, the ambiguous shift between functional object and aesthetic object, demonstrates the lines between which Michael Asher's works operate with increasingly analytical precision, deconstructing our notions of the sculptural as though they would want to prove that sculpture as a category has lost its material and historical legitimacy.

(Benjamin Buchloh, *Michael Asher and the Conclusion of Modernist Sculpture*)



Symposium on Space and Time

Topics: Spacetime, Topological spaces, Topology, Time functions, Topological vector spaces, Differential topology, Trajectories, Mathematical surfaces, Projective geometry, Homeomorphism, Topology and topography

Topography is a branch of geography concerned with the natural and constructed features on the surface of land, such as mountains, lakes, roads, and buildings. Topology is a branch of mathematics concerned with the distortion of shapes.

(<https://plus.maths.org/content/dividing-walls-topology-and-topography-i>)

The work ranging ambiguously across the literal, mythic and metaphorical of both a psychic and material topology and topography.



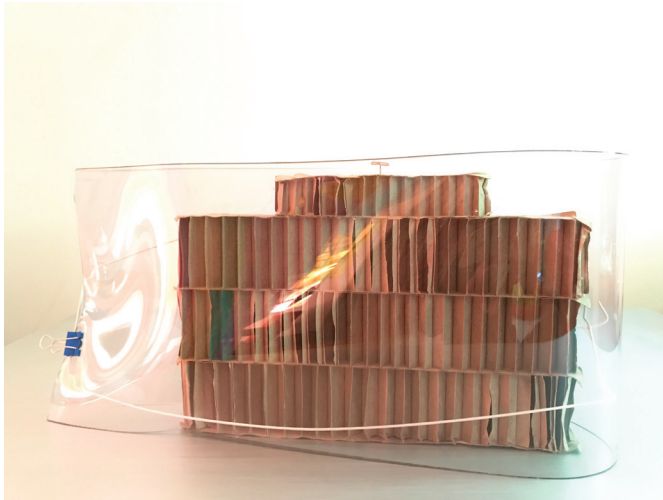
14. The Conclusion of Modernist Sculpture

The denial of “the illusion of the three-dimension[al]” is paralleled by the repudiation of traditional expectations of sculpture: durability, monumentality and the artist’s control of materials. The distinction in the plastic arts between painting’s appeal to the eye, and sculpture’s references to other bodily senses, is self-evident when dealing with figurative sculpture. But as sculpture became increasingly abstract, shape and materials were emphasized. Colour, previously considered indulgent or overly sensuous in sculpture, also became a key element.

(Lucina Ward, *Soft Sculpture*)

It took artists of the minimal and post-minimal generation like Carl Andre and Richard Serra in the mid- and late 1960s to literally “decompose” these mythified construction techniques, materials, and production procedures. The aesthetic shock and subsequent relief that their work might have caused originally resulted precisely from the deconstruction of sculpture, the perseverance of singularized, particular elements, clarification of the constituent forces within the sculptural construct, and the transparency of the production procedures evident in their work. It is symptomatic in this context that Serra referred to the technique of welding as “stitching”.

(Benjamin Buchloh, *Michael Asher and the Conclusion of Modernist Sculpture*)



Raymond Williams starts from the premise that like all made objects, art objects are materially produced within a society. However, art objects become reified under formalism, such as Greenberg and Bell's. The rhetoric of art theory claims these objects are distinct from other objects because their production is defined by the "medium" in which they are constituted. William tries to reveal the attempt to partition off art objects from other produced objects as a response by the middle class to the alienation of labor. Therefore, there is nothing intrinsic in the object or in the experience of it that distinguishes it from the other objects produced in society. Rather it is a set of social practices that define and declare the object art.

(Tony Gibart, <http://csmt.uchicago.edu/glossary2004/objecthood.htm>)



15. Persistent Over Permanent Forms

Sculpture in general is an incurably alert production, stressing fixity, endurance, and power—all that man himself cannot maintain except in intermittent defiance of gravity. On the other hand, a soft sculpture, in various propositions, might suggest fatigue, deterioration or inertia. It mimes a kind of surrender to the natural condition that pulls bodies down.

(Max Kozloff, "The Poetics of Softness")

Eva Hesse, Robert Rauschenberg, and Joseph Beuys emphasize persistent over permanent forms—producing works with a certain unfixed quality or which incorporate the memory of other forms.

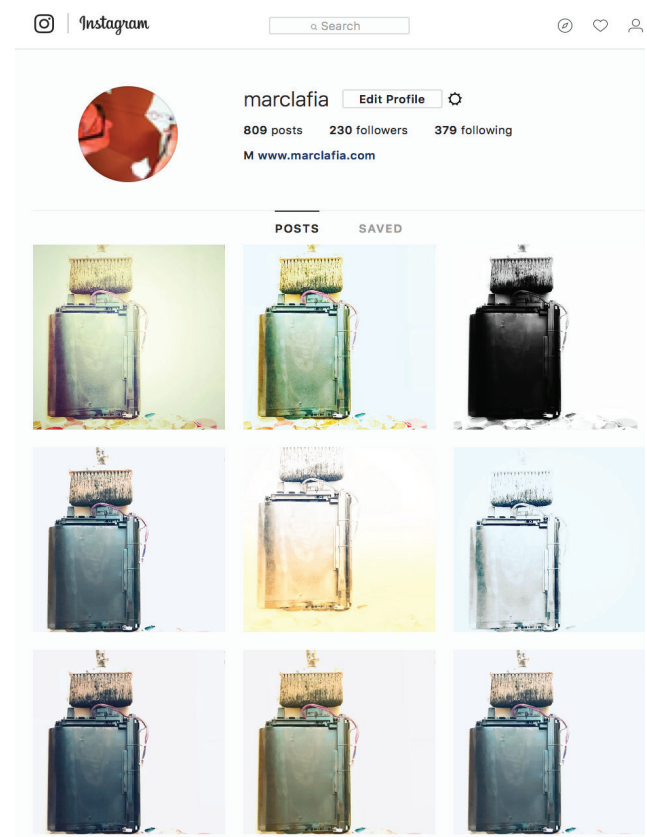
It seems a truism at this point that the static, portable, indoor art object can do no more than carry a decorative load that becomes increasingly uninteresting. One waits for the next season's polished metal boxes, stretched tie dyes, and elegantly applied liquitex references to Art Deco with about as much anticipation as one reserves for the look of next year's Oldsmobile-Ford probably has a better idea. At least a couple of routes move away from this studio- and factory-generated commodity art.

This does not mean that process is not very much part of the work. It is, but it is located within the one who participates in the experience of this art. That is, one is thrown back onto one's awareness of such things as the duration of acclimation to a dark room (to take Bell, for example) during which a certain piece of specific visual information gradually becomes sensate. A certain duration of time is necessary for the experience of much designated outdoor art.

(Robert Morris, *Continuous Project Altered Daily*)

16. Objecthood in Instagram

For artists such as Donald Judd, Carl Andre and others, however, the modular nature of industrial forms—scaled for ease of use and portability by the average worker—frequently meant that the dimensions of resultant works of art or the negative spaces between components retained a proportional relationship to the viewer's body.



I imagine the above made by Gratz Industries (formerly Treitel-Gratz). Yes.

Archive Collection

Gratz Industries is proud to have worked with the following designers, architects, and sculptors: Joseph Pilates, Mies Van der Rohe, Donald Deskey, Raymond Loewy, Marcel Breuer, Isamu Noguchi, Alexander Liberman, I.M. Pei, Richard Meier, Philip Johnson, Massimo Vignelli, Hugh Hardy, Donald Judd, Walter De Maria, Forrest Myers, Nicos Zographos, Sol LeWitt, Robert Indiana, Barnett Newman, Liam Gillick, John Portman, Maya Lin, Dakota Jackson, Robert Rauschenberg, Santiago Calatrava, Deborah Berke, Diane Lewis, William Katavolos, Ross Littell and Douglas Kelly.

17. Process Becomes Product



If it's not soft its stuffed, but what is soft, what is stuff, what is stuffed?

Multiformal or non-rigid art

Forms that are persistent rather than rigid or permanent, and objects that are soft to the touch or evoke the visceral qualities of the body.

It is still 'minimal' in its actual presence; note the avoidance of mass in Sandback's string pieces, the flimsiness of Sonnier's hanging fabrics, the reluctance to delineate volume clearly in Saret's crumpled balls of wire fencing. Much of the new work looks vulnerable, not only spatially insubstantial, but dominated also by the effects of time.

Though non-rigid art may at times refer to the weight and degrees of energy of the human body, it is not 'humanist' because the viewer so often feels excluded, deprived of some states or parts of the work. Robert Morris essay "anti-form" "object-type" art.

To Robert Morris, the uncontrollable forces of nature are embodied in the law of gravity, which dominates his drooping, spasmodically curling lengths of felt. More than method, process becomes product itself when, as in Morris's heroic and helpless cloth pieces, the work itself can be altered. Unlike an Andre floor piece, any change in a Morris work may be noticeable, though only to someone who has seen the piece in an earlier state. Memory is essential to comprehension in this case.



18. Situated in Space

The object of art, art as a world of objects: sounds rather strange. But for the most part, that's what it is, a world of things, of stuff. It was important for a time for this stuff to put on and perform the space it was in. To read, to re-read its space of exhibition.

A work of art is situated in space. But it will not do to say it simply exists in space: a work of art treats space according to its own needs, defines space and even creates such space as may be necessary to it.

(Henri Focillon, *The Life Forms of Art*)



19. To Take Hold of the World

The work (which is what?) of art as spatially and situationally specific, institutionally specific, knowing that it knows where it is.

As the renowned Swiss curator Harald Szeemann said in his essay for the groundbreaking exhibit *When Attitudes Become Forms*:

Pieces as situationally specific as any architectural or relief sculpture was ever meant to be, but by a very novel and simple means.

Today, there is an awareness and desire for something more, a desire to turn upside down this idea. I desire and want to situate real space, geography, geology, social space from the virtual world we now live in, the networked world that has totally enveloped us and make it physical again and let it situate me. I want to take hold of the real physical world and behold it. As Marshall McLuhan told us almost fifty years ago, with satellites surrounding the planet, the earth has become an artwork. In his sense, there is nothing natural here as we have come to program the whole of it. Or, so we think. Hence, the age of the Anthropocene.

Just as today we want to reclaim discussion or put on the performative of social discourse and politics, of feminist and ecological concerns, inside the art world, inside the white cube, we also want to take possession, take site/sight of the physical world and not make out of it art to use art to see it as something of its own.

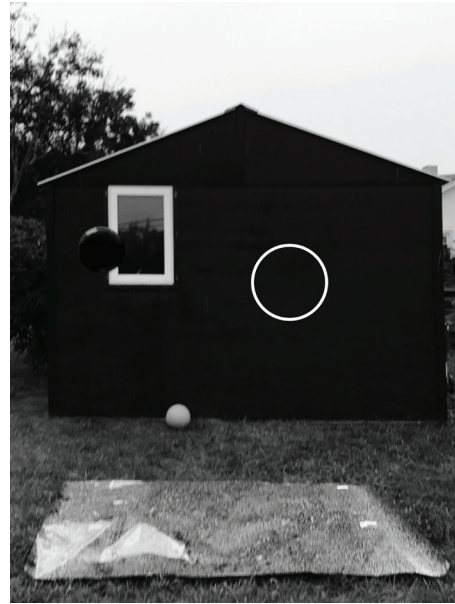
20. The Expanded or Morphogenic Field

From the moment of Fluxus and Pop (e.g. Claes Oldenburg, Allan Kaprow, and Robert Whitman) in the late Fifties and early Sixties to figures such as Michael Asher and Dan Graham at the end of that decade, approaches to sculpture asked specific questions about its sites and situations in the remnants of the former public sphere. Yet these artists were not merely involved in a critique of the discourses of exhibitions and the museum institution, but they actually contemplated the collective conditions governing the experience of objects and spaces under the visual regimes of late capitalism.

(Benjamin Buchloh)

The redefinition of sculpture described above consisted not only in debunking the modernist notion of the sculpture as an autonomous object in space, but also insisting on sculpture's engagement of a specific site as newly fundamental to its meaning.

Rosalind Krauss would name this new condition "sculpture in the expanded field" in a highly influential essay of the same name.



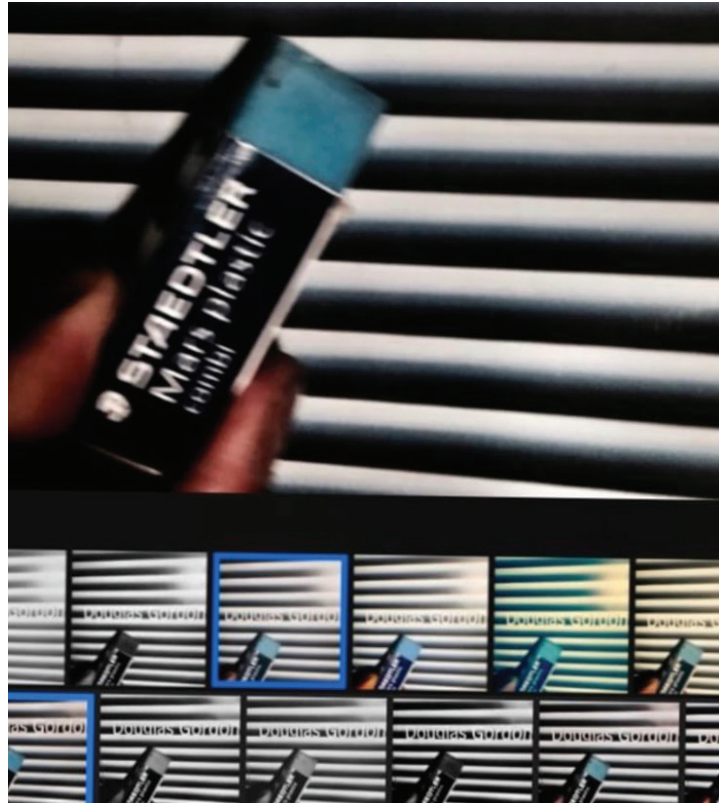
Robert Smithson books are placed on the library floor between the stacks, a minimalist momentary monument.

Mylar placed on the ground in front of an outdoor shed, I continually throw up balls to capture their movement, to freeze them in time. I draw a circle on the photography.

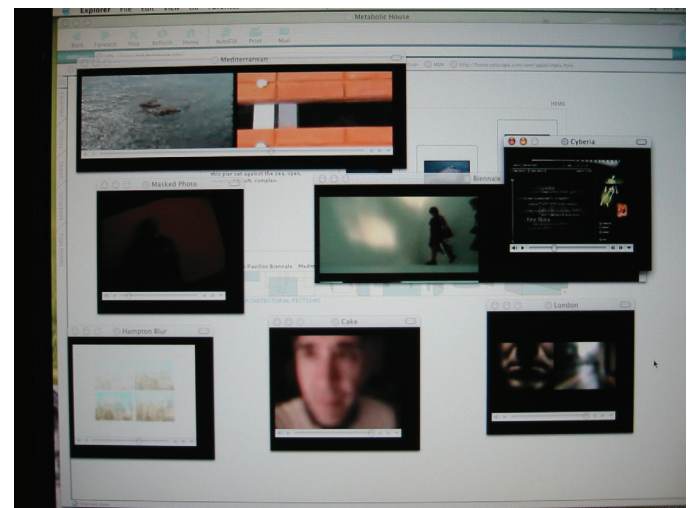
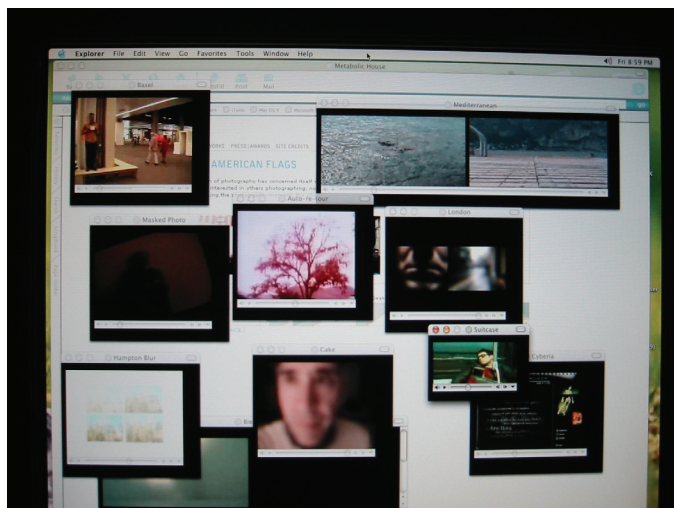


Site and recording.

21. Form, Recordings, and Erasure



Erasure



The particulars of history fall away in the obsolescence of their formats. Formats are a kind of OS, an operating system. They engender form.

22. “Non-Places”

Staging the objects, the things, the various media—drawing, photography, sound installation and sculpture—so that they not only spill out across multiple rooms and windows of the GAP gallery but also suggest varied narratives.

How can the work find

its conceptual coordinates in, and responds to, newer conditions of space as defined by experiences of transience and circulation rather than a stable constellation of unique places – a condition which anthropologist Marc Augé has termed “non-places,” a category of space that is not “relational, or historical, or concerned with identity.” Neither universal and homogenous nor localized and specific, non-places are a product of the late 20th century whose divestment of uniqueness or locational value (Augé identifies transit centers or large retail outlets as examples) has come to characterize the contemporary global landscape to a significant degree.

Is the Meier building indeed this kind of non-place?

The Modernist idea of space as abstract and continuous, as well as the postmodernist idea of spatial context as specific and differential.

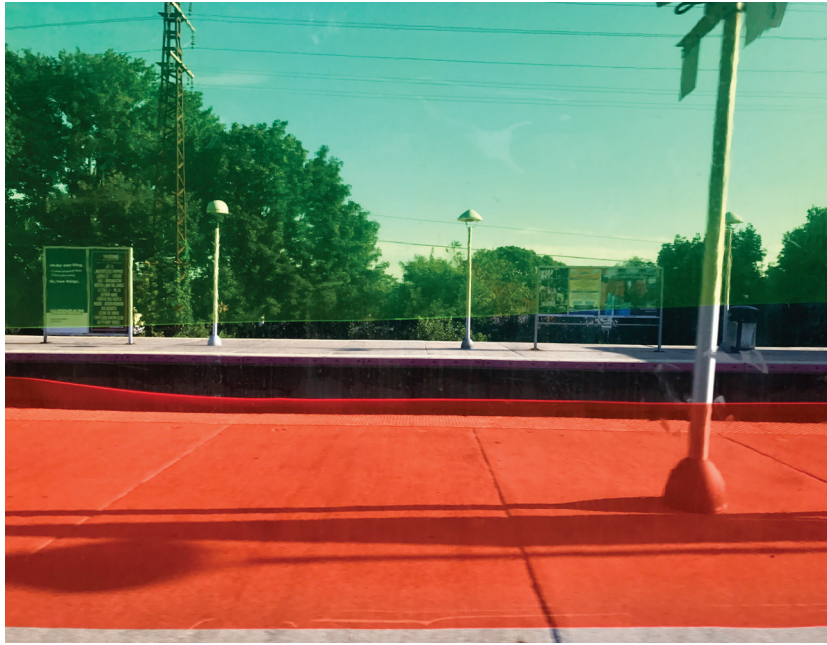
Today’s exhibitions are all pre-visualized, like a pop-up store or a new boutique. They are carefully planned and the space of exhibition rendered virtually in a perfectly measured model, as well as the works to be placed in the space. A team then comes in and installs according to plan.





There is a certain hazard or spontaneity in my studio. Where one work ends and another begins, I am not so sure. Often they commingle, contaminate each other. One is taken apart to become another or to join with another.

Then, there are numerous photographs not printed. So, there is the world of things as images moved around on the model or computer space of the page, and then there are physical or material things, this world of objects, forms, fabric pieces, paintings and so on. It's the condition we live in, an augmented reality, or parallel reality. It was what I was saying above about the Mylar, this displacement or overlay within, on the top of, alongside the actual. In this sense, Smithton's notion of site and non-site and bringing them together was



prescient of our time. Only the displacement is quite actual, like code stored on a server somewhere, and it is where we spend a great deal of our time. We might say that the displaced has taken up, even taken over, the physical.

In the above photographs, I want to displace the recording of the actual, distance it.

In any event, all these objects, all these things, must be gathered up, produced and fabricated for exhibition. Art, then, is for sure a material encounter of and with the world. It's sensate, blocks of sensation.

Most works of art are discrete, they are to be complete unto themselves. The variability I want, then, might be thought of as an ensemble of possibilities, a set of possible configurations, of varied stagings. In this way, the set of underlying constitutive elements remains, but they can be figured and staged in varied ways. In this way, they are iterative, notational.

I continue with a dematerialization of the art object, art as action or art as idea. Art as how to engage and read the world, take it up. Art as complex, but simply event. How, then, do I consider objects? Objects as situations as events.

See, for example, Lucy Lippard's 1968 essay "The Dematerialization of Art," in which Lippard argues for the real possibility of the "object's becoming wholly obsolete." The critic argues that the art object was understood by the moment of the late 1960s as merely the product of a conceptual process (if indeed an object persisted at all as part of an artist's work), and furthermore insisted that the process itself was of primary value to the artist.

(Nicholas Machida, *Site Insecurities: Thomas Hirschhorn's Skulptur-Sortier-Station (1997 and on)*)

22. The True Artist Helps the World by Revealing Mystic Truths

Whatever an artist does in her or his studio qualifies as art.



**The True Artist Helps the World By
Revealing Mystic Truths** 1967/2017 50-year anniversary edition

. . . Nauman was encouraged by support from regional artists and cohorts like California Funk artist William T. Wiley. Nauman is quoted as saying “Wiley was the strongest influence I had. It was in being rigorous, being honest with yourself—trying to be clear—taking a moral position.” Lewallen states: “Wiley was inspiring, always open and receptive to unorthodox ideas, and carried no preconceptions. His work has always been a by- product of his life (the synchronicity of art and life is shared by many artists in the region), and anything and everything was potential content.”

An inclination toward free exploration of ideas and forms.

The True Artist Helps the World By Revealing Mystic Truths (1967), a neon sculpture that writes the text of the title in glowing blue cursive, and *Failure to Levitate in the Studio* (1966), a black and white double-exposure of Nauman’s body slumped on the floor between two chairs, present opposing questions. The works ask: Is the artist meant to transcend and suspend disbeliefs and reveal mystic truths? Or is the artist’s function practice and process and the possibilities of failure? Through the

act of making these diverse works, he tells us that the answer is both and, perhaps, neither—given how the humor pulls the rug out from under such grandiose claims.

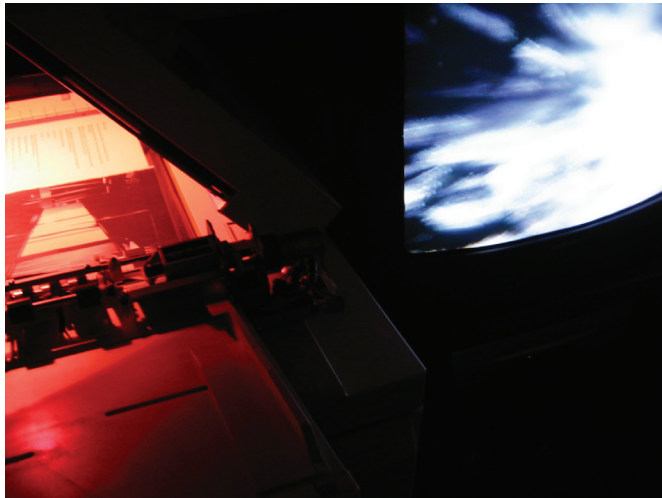
Accepting contradiction and exploration as a methodology, Nauman invents experiments that produce an open questioning, never building a defense before work is made. Today, I rarely experience art that admits vulnerability by acknowledging failure, the unknown and its own process. Nauman's approach values investigative thought and his process reminds us as artists to find the space to explore ideas beyond premeditation and against external pressures. He embraces the mental freedom that is integral to any thoughtful art practice.

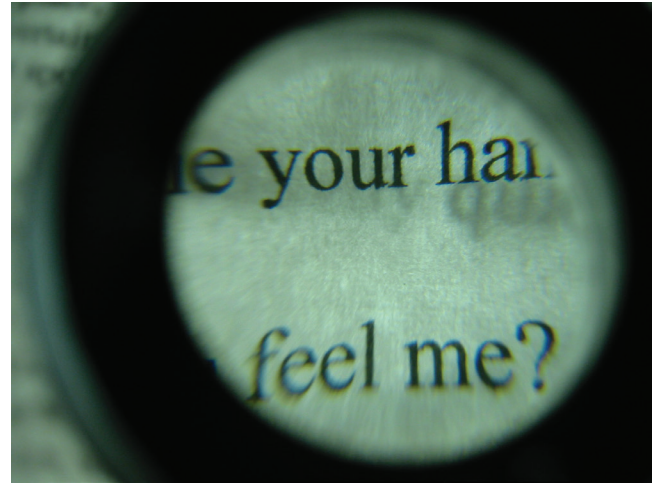
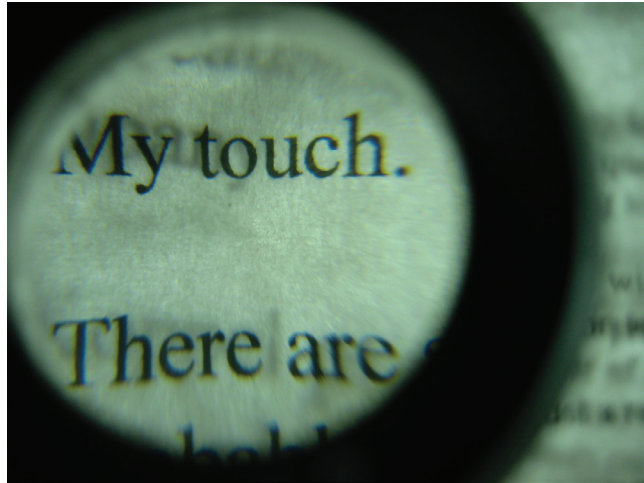
(Wendy Mason, "The Overlooked and the In-Between," <http://x-traonline.org/article/the-overlooked-and-the-in-between/>)

24. Space

The show or exhibition of objects and space.







The idea of a non-installation art would be something of an oxymoron. Inasmuch as a structural change has occurred, it has been most clear-cut at the level of critical and theoretical paradigms. The move to installation certainly has not resulted in a complete dissolution of the sculptural object, nor of the distinctive structures of response elicited by a traditional sculpture. Rather it has entailed a progressive abandonment of the assumption prevalent in much nineteenth- and twentieth-century sculptural aesthetics that the authentic art object has to be completely self-sufficient, its significance unaffected by the circumstances of its display. This view is succinctly summed up in a comment by the theorist of cubism, Daniel-Henri Kahnweiler, in an essay called "The Essence of Sculpture," published in 1919, to the effect that a sculpture must exist as "the object pure and simple, detached from everything surrounding it".

The underlying processes common to both object- and installation-orientated work have to do with the nature of the encounter being staged between viewer and work and the resulting interplay operating at a phenomenological level between focused and dispersed apprehension. At the same time, such processes also play out a larger sociocultural dynamic of dispersal and binding, or dissolution and reification, that is the common condition of the object as commodity or quasi-commodity in modern culture.

Perhaps the most striking structural reversal effected by the move to installation has been the substitution of a centring object or quasi-figure by an empty space which the viewer can enter or imagine doing so.

(Alex Potts, "Installation and Sculpture")



25. Everything Is Material for Art

The color images above are from the installation *Not Just a Recording*. It was staged in a copy shop, a duplication office, designed as a kind of mystery about recording, not as memory but as a disappearance. The entire space was surveilled by a camera and played back in real time on a monitor, re-presenting the viewer as being inside a recording, in a work about recording, about doubling, dispersal, duplication and yes, disappearance.

The mise-en-scène suggest a story both about technology, with Xerox machines, typewriters, cameras, monitors, tape recorders and screens and a protagonist, missing behind the screen, insisting she is not just a recording.

The black and white image above is a reworking of *Le Eclisse* by Antonioni, *The Spaces of Love*: a narrative about narrative. Abstraction and meta narrative. “Abstraction is a language unto itself, it is itself its own narrative.” There is no signification but itself, pure, and of and for itself. Meta-narrative abstracts narrative, making it seen. Abtraction in a sense removes the meta and just is.

There is no such thing as a good painting about nothing.

(Motherwell & Gottlieb)

There is no such thing as a good painting about something.

(Ad Reinhardt)

Art didn't need to be anything else.

Oscar Wilde prefaces his novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, with a reflection on art, the artist, and the utility of both. After careful scrutiny, he concludes: "All art is quite useless" (Wilde 4). In this one sentence, Wilde encapsulates the complete principles of the Aesthetic Movement popular in Victorian England. That is to say, real art takes no part in molding the social or moral identities of society, nor should it. Art should be beautiful and pleasure its observer, but to imply further-reaching influence would be a mistake. The explosion of aesthetic philosophy in fin-de- siècle English society, as exemplified by Oscar Wilde, was not confined to merely art, however. Rather, the proponents of this philosophy extended it to life itself. Here, aestheticism advocated whatever behavior was likely to maximize the beauty and happiness in one's life, in the tradition of hedonism. To the aesthete, the ideal life mimics art; it is beautiful, but quite useless beyond its beauty, concerned only with the individual living it. Influences on others, if existent, are trivial at best.'

(Patrick Duggan, "The Conflict Between Aestheticism and Morality in Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*")

Stuart Morgan: Your work is based on a critique, first of art, then of other disciplines: philosophy, anthropology, psychoanalysis...

Joseph Kosuth: What is the nature of making art? If it is not simply about fashioning forms and colours, then it has to do with the production of meaning. My practice is based on that assumption. If you begin there you realize that potentially everything is material for art, because at some point it has to have an aspect of concretion and must be framed in relation to people's lives. It does not need to illustrate or work with that, but it does need to have a connection to the community which produced it.

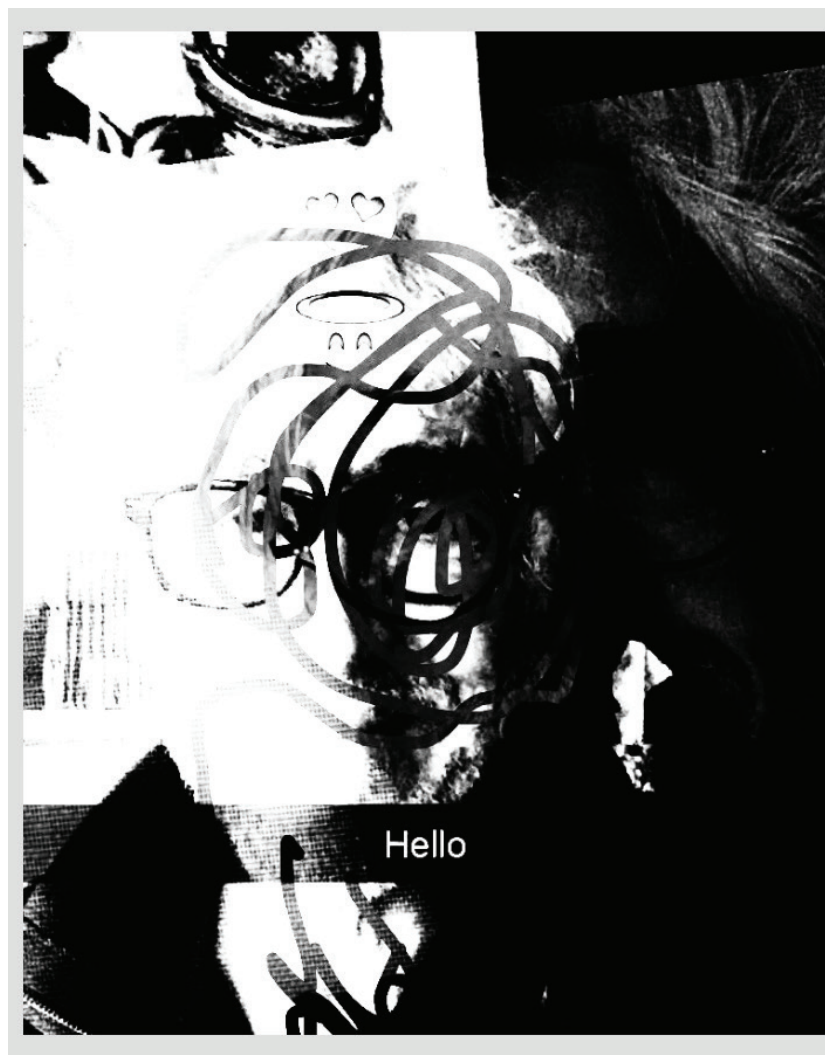
SM: So art is about the making of meaning.

JK: Yes, and that involves not only the assertion of meaning but also its cancellation, since one kind of meaning needs to be produced through cancellation or denial or erasure of a group of meanings..... What I learned from Ad Reinhardt was that he painted black paintings but he also taught, wrote texts about his works, drew cartoons, took part in panel discussions... His practice included an enormous production of meaning about what art was. You can't separate the paintings from the rest. It's the same with Judd and his writings. What we have now is a struggle over the meaning of art, between what I have called primary and secondary texts in relation to production.

(<https://frieze.com/article/art-idea-idea>)

These are living entities these are, these are really really painted paintings and they're here to be looked at that is what they're for I mean Reinhart's insistence that art was just art it didn't need to be anything else was an insistence on art's own self-sufficiency which is something we don't hear much now you know art for art's sake is an aesthetic ideological idea is one and that's worth debating but in Reinhardt's version of it it is not Oscar Wilde it is not art versus utility in the sort of 19th century way it is simply the declaration that a complete art experience can be had and that a complete art experience is all you need to have it doesn't need to have an alibi a subtext another reason for being and what he did with these paintings was to demonstrate by example how many different ways one could do that.

(A talk by Robert Storr)



26. An Encounter of Sense, without Representation

a complete art experience is all you need to have. it doesn't need to have an alibi a subtext another reason for being

This is not to say that a work of art need not include an alibi, or, more precisely, be about an alibi, or deconstruct one. The alibi is a narrative, albeit a supposed false one, or in the case of the work of art, a need for the heavy lifting to be done by something outside itself.

Gerhard Richter moves easily between, let's say, narrative painting and abstract painting. Each are different registers for him. Each has its own mood, its own experiential properties, its own real, if you like.

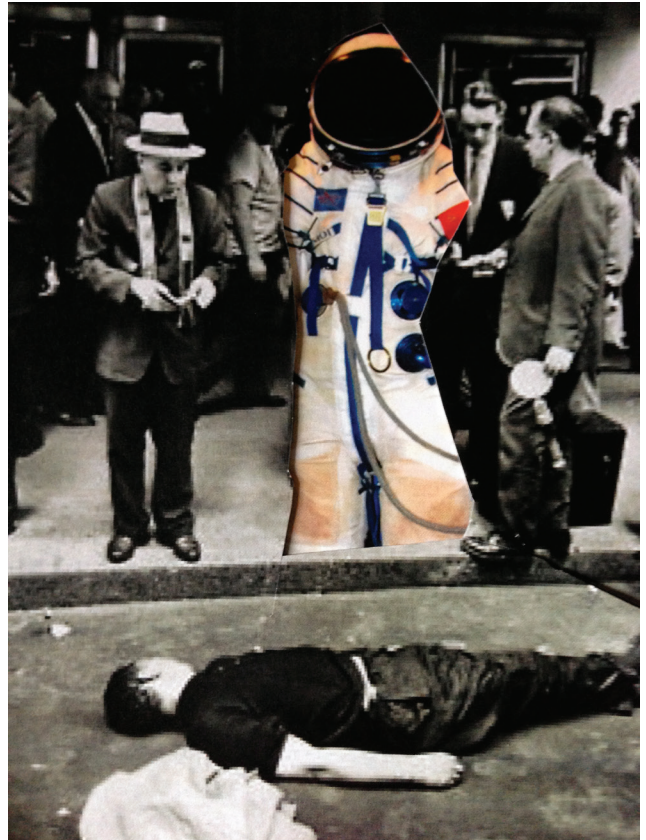
As to narrative, am I confusing this with representation and not understanding it as an encounter of sense? That sensation has its own narrative. And do I mean by narrative legibility, a determined sense, even if open? What if what is in front of me is an openness that exceeds my ability to narrativize or summarize? Constructing an image of thought beyond representation such that said image exceeds or has more meaning. Intuitions, then, can be recovered discursively.

Smithson, like Don Judd, Robert Morris, and others, took the break with representation to its most extreme edge, in Judd's case expunging any reference to anything outside of the object. Smithson's practice was also located "beyond" representation in this sense, although it also had a *mythic* quality to it. Indeed, as we shall see, a certain notion of narrative, albeit a kind of posthuman geological narrative, is present throughout his work.

As Smithson also remarks in his essay on "Donald Judd": With Judd there is no confusion between the anthropomorphic and the abstract. This makes for an increased consciousness of structure, which retains a remote distance from the organic. The "unconscious" has no place in his art. His crystalline state of mind is far removed from the organic floods of "action painting". He translates his concepts into artifices of fact, without any illusionistic representations.

(Simon Sullivan, in Robert Smithson, *The Collected Writings*, p. 5.)

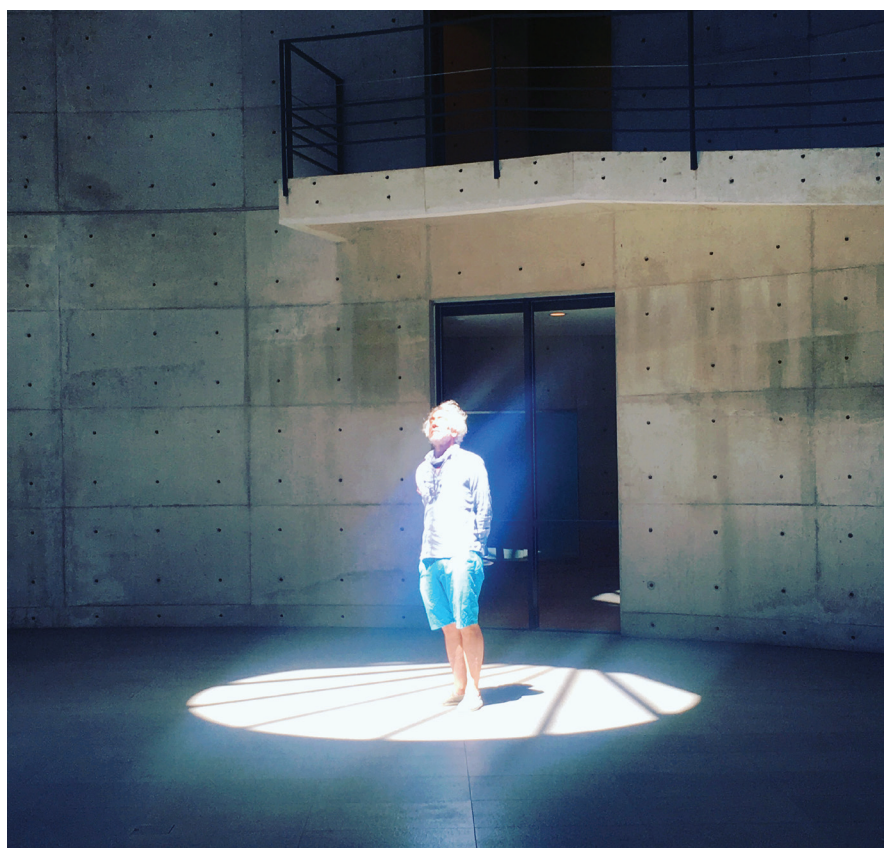
And this narrative: isn't it always a reading itself? A being? An inhabitation? A taking up? A going with? An image of thought? An immanence? That is already there without representation; rather, a presentation itself. I think this is my fear, my apprehension: a desire to say something, with something already said. When it comes to this new work.





Wherein is my narrative, my body, my being, my history, in the work? That is a continual concern—from a desire for the minimalism and emptiness, the quiet of the spatial environments that I saw on the Setouchi Islands for the Triennial. This quiet, and at other times desiring more excitement, more color, more flux and flow. This other desire to present a body, not so much a figure, not so much biography, but bodies, social bodies.

At other times, I feel this is without body, without being, without history, but of course it's not. The fabric adds a very different material note than plastic. Fabric is more sensual, sensuous, warmer, tactile.





A painting, however, is still a relatively private, individual activity, and its freest, most abstract form is not concerned with communicating specific information or subject matter. Because it is universal, unhistorical, and independent of everyday existence doesn't mean it doesn't have any meaning. Some people think that if a painting doesn't have a subject, or isn't a picture, than it doesn't have a meaning. This just isn't true.

After Cezanne began to separate subject matter from color structure, the theme of the cubist, abstract tradition that followed is creation itself—creation of things, images, that didn't exist before they come into being. Ad Reinhardt

The "Modern" is said to begin in 1880 when Cézanne exiled himself in Aix to solve the great riddle of how to strip knowing from seeing—how to paint perception.

(Jeanne Willette, *Paul Cézanne*)

Reinhardt's commitment and clarity is formidable. I think of his sense of timelessness and contrast it with Robert Smithson's sense of entropy. Both of them rejecting historical time. Political time in sense.

Reinhardt's rejection of the mix of poets, musicians and artists is for that very reason: their time is embodied, full of celebrity, appetite, decay and death.

Then the whole mixture, the number of poets and musicians and writers mixed up with art. Disreputable. Cage, Cunningham, Johns, Rauschenberg. I'm against the mixture of all the arts, against the mixture of art and life, you know, everyday life.



Timelessness: a common usage of this term is associated with universality. To be specific, some kind of aesthetical value that transcends all cultural contexts. One art critic said, for instance,

A masterpiece (of art) expresses what is universal, timeless, and meaningful for all people.

27. This Way and That, and Then That Again

Life forms, the discrete and the ensemble, the variegated and variable. How to present and archive that which is not fixed and always forming, but at a limit?

When artists begin to think of the space of exhibition, the site-specificity of the space where their work will show (perhaps better said “inhabit”), the space then becomes activated, activated by the work in relation to the space. As an ensemble of sense impressions, the work shows or sets off the space, and the whole of it becomes one sense-impression. Of course, it has many moments, many passages, discrete objects and things modeled by light, set off in space, near and far to each other, the persons that will encounter them or live with them.

The new works have taken on form, shape, and volume. Not only are there the ambient light or fabric sculptures, scrims, and tube pieces, but also now volumetric works. Works that hang from the ceiling with string hover above the floor, or on the floor, against bookshelves, against the light of large windows, set on the wall, or serialized as in the same, or almost same object repeated. These objects take on different appearances at times with the ambient light, and others florescent or LED light. Lighting and light being part of the consideration and activation of the works.

Many of the works themselves change and permute, being shaped this way or that. All of it begging the question: what is the shape of a work, when its very form is to be shaped, this way, and that, and then again that? Works can be shaped and layered with other works. It is work built on an ontology of shaping, a shaping that then becomes a table, an ensemble of sense. Just as our bodies, our human form, can take on different shapes, the work is also always at a limit.

As an ensemble of materials, of forms and fabrics, passing in and through language, broken out as letters, language that envelopes us, that inhabits us, word statements on Mylar and free floating letters on clear plastic shaped as a form, forms like sand castles, light through mesh, through patient bags, Latex as flesh, tubes as esophagi...



If, as William Empson explains, a keyword is a “compacted doctrine,” a form that compresses multiple, often divergent, meanings, then life form may be considered to embody a “capacious doctrine,” a term with a constitutive incompleteness, ready for use in working out fresh problems.

But form also immediately points to matters of classification and representation. These two notions of form—as emergent with embodiment and as a tool of classification—coil around each other in nineteenth-century discussions about how an organism’s morphology might be affected by its surrounding environment and about how this might in turn guide possible classificatory schemes. This dual sense of form, as we will see, shapes deductive, inductive, and abductive approaches to the question of how life takes form.

(Alan Durant & Colin MacCabe, *Compacted Doctrines: William Empson and the Meanings of Words*)

The forms of art precisely providing “solutions” to “problems” of space, time-perception *and* memory (that is, specifically *human* problems).

For Deleuze, following Bergson, this gets to the very heart of philosophy’s role: to think beyond the human (*beyond* representation). We might say then that the camera, and in fact all “visualising” technologies, continue Bergson’s intuitive method “outside” of philosophy. We might also say that the actualisations these technologies perform and produce are specifically *non-human*, or *machinic* modes of consciousness.

(Simon Sullivan)

28. Hounds and Poodles

There are no essential forms, yet there are fields.

At least, forms that are transcendental archetypes. There are morphogenetic fields, but no essentialism, as in ideal forms that stand out or apart or above the imminent and material world.

I don’t think abstraction is about essentialism. In its reductionism, it is not an aim to get to something pure as in essential as much as it is the elimination of what is considered unnecessary, distracting. It is a very different kind of work than figuration within which was held the beginnings of abstraction. Like painting, sculpture went through a systematic interrogation of its *raison d’être*, its forms and materials. In both, it led to the body, embodied perception and to the institution of the museum, its spaces and authority. Whereas the poets, musicians, dancers, and technologists (Billy Kluver, *EAT*) brought an expansion of life, energy, and formats to the then more narrow field of the visual arts, retaining the mystic and literary, we might say, the abstractionist or purist (including Reinhardt, Rothko, and Robert Irwin) brings work towards an event of presence.

The later presence is a kind of presence unto itself, whereas the non-abstractionists record their presence in their work. Hence, you have Abstract Expressionism. The record of an expression, an expressive abstraction. And once you let go of the abstraction, you have expression as being, art as life. I think we will always have these two modalities and a mix of these tendencies going on.

Francis Bacon always emphasized in his work that he wanted to “assault the nervous system” with the “rawness of the image,” to deliver a “visual shock” and that his work was devoid of narrative, insisting that he had “no story to tell”.

(<https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fnhum.2013.00730/full>)

In Giles Deleuze's favorite example, the wasp and orchid create a "becoming" or symbiotic emergent unit.

(<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/deleuze/>)

Morphogenetic fields are not fixed forever, but evolve. The fields of Afghan hounds and poodles have become different from those of their common ancestors, wolves.

(<https://www.sheldrake.org/research/morphic-resonance/introduction>)

In his magnum opus *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze tries to develop a metaphysics adequate to contemporary mathematics and science—a metaphysics in which the concept of multiplicity replaces that of substance, event replaces essence and virtuality replaces possibility

the aim of philosophy is not to rediscover the eternal or the universal, but to find the singular conditions under which something new is produced. In other words—and this is a pragmatic perspective from which Deleuze never deviated—philosophy aims not at stating the conditions of knowledge qua representation, but at finding and fostering the conditions of creative production.

The positive name for that genetic condition is the virtual, which Deleuze adopts from the following Bergsonian argument. The notion of the possible, Bergson holds in *Creative Evolution*, is derived from a false problem that confuses the "more" with the "less" and ignores differences in kind; there is not less but more in the idea of the possible than in the real, just as there is more in the idea of nonbeing than in that of being, or more in the idea of disorder than in that of order. When we think of the possible as somehow "pre-existing" the real, we think of the real, then we add to it the negation of its existence, and then we project the "image" of the possible into the past. We then reverse the procedure and think of the real as something more than possible, that is, as the possible with existence added to it. We then say that the possible has been "realized" in the real. By contrast, Deleuze will reject the notion of the possible in favor of that of the virtual. Rather than awaiting realization, the virtual is fully real; what happens in genesis is that the virtual is actualized.

On this score, Deleuze often likes to cite Jorge Luis Borges's famous story, "The Garden of the Forking Paths," in which such a virtual world is described in the labyrinthine book of a Chinese philosopher named Ts'ui Pên: "In all fiction, when a man is faced with alternatives, he chooses one at the expense of others. In the almost unfathomable Ts'ui Pên, he chooses— simultaneously—all of them... In Ts'ui Pên's work, all the possible solutions occur, each one being the point of departure for other bifurcations."

(<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/deleuze/>)



44

**When
Form
Becomes
Attitude**

Whereas I'd been taken up with the sensual and tactile characteristics of the materials I'd been working with, letting their qualities very much dictate their shaping, I have now taken up a greater awareness of form and am only gradually coming to see that I have been retracing many of the steps and attitudes of post-minimalism.

At the same time, this taking up is itself a performative practice of being and art. Through the consideration of form, specifically, I also consider my form of living and working, in the house and studio. Form and anti-form, being and commingling, being and social being. Here, form becomes social form, family form, the forms of friendship and community, the taking up of life.

The being of living, my living and those around me. As the material work of art takes up for me its own expansive form, as we are moving more and more into an increasingly demonstrably authoritarian climate. Not just politically, but also in the so-called art world itself, whose strictures and rules of social climbing through capital and access (in a globalized market where artists can be sourced from anywhere) narrow conversation in a belief of increasing plurality and inclusiveness. An inclusiveness and critique blunted by its commodification and ready disappearance: on to the next! The artists, the academy, the galleries and institutions, the fairs—everyone is put on a neverending treadmill, of more, more, more, where those *in* are never secure enough on those *out*, clamoring to get *in*. In...to what?





My expansive sense of form, then, as art as a life practice, through the material and sensate—I sense this truly was Beuys’s proposition—continues working back and into Szeemann’s proposition of “when attitudes become form” in the sense of work, life, and being entwined, as the practice of life and art, by engaging not anti-form, but, for a moment, the notion of the solidity of form, even if it is anti-form. This seems to be me both retrograde and forward looking, or perhaps just a way of being, of taking possession of time, or being present. Yes, the Artist is Present. Yes, art as a presencing of the world. Even if it’s quietly and, for the most part, alone.





From radiant object or refractive object, from surface of variable transparency to more and more pleated or topological surfaces mapped onto volume, the object builds more and more character, more presence, more thingness. But this is a thingness or a three-dimensional object that is contingent, a possible shape that will inevitably not hold its shape. It is a thing to be shaped.

Soft as they are, the newer works enclose space, and there is the suggestion of a persistence of form. Of course, this is humorous to me, as it is very much anti-form (in the sense of “*informe*,” to find a form for formlessness, to show the form that has no form). But in today’s accelerating world of image disappearance, this might be as solid as you get.

It is the activity of art making, life making, that these forms have suggested to me. A kind of zen practice.

45

**The Ecstatic,
the Quiet
as Form**

Can we truly say that “art reprograms the world”? Rather, isn’t it very much a part of the program of the world, of transnational flows of capital, cultural transmission, one-upmanship, etc.?

In *Postproduction*, I try to show that artists’ intuitive relationship with art history is now going beyond what we call “the art of appropriation,” which naturally infers an ideology of ownership, and moving toward a culture of the use of forms, a culture of constant activity of signs based on a collective ideal: sharing. The Museum like the City itself constitute a catalog of forms, postures, and images for artists – collective equipment that everyone is in a position to use, not in order to be subjected to their authority but as tools to probe the contemporary world. There is (fertile) static on the borders between consumption and production that can be perceived well beyond the borders of art. When artists find material in objects that are already in circulation on the cultural market, the work of art takes on a script-like value: “when screenplays become form,” in a sense.

(Nicolas Bourriaud, *Postproduction: Culture as Screenplay: How Art Reprograms the World*)

I do like Bourriaud’s appropriation of Hollywood forms and Silicon Valley’s platforms and programming, yet I am not so certain that human relations in such formats indeed open up and come to reprogram the world.

I’ve become interested not in the screenplay but in the silent movie, the vastness of silence, the long *durée*—events that occur nearly imperceptibly over a long period, the time of the long-term structures of social reality was privileged over the time of events (“dust” for Braudel). Not the cultural script of immediacy, but a different kind of ecstatic time. Not world time, but the ecstatic, the quiet as form. I am reminded of Smithson’s sense of time and interest not in the mythic but in entropy. In that sense, it’s not ecstatic but more of a minerality, a geologic time, time that’s not a script. At the very least, a very different kind of play.

The works of many of these artists celebrate what Flavin calls “inactive history” or what the physicist calls “entropy” or “energy-drain.” They bring to mind the Ice Age rather than the Golden Age, and would most likely confirm Vladimir Nabokov’s observation that, “The future is but the obsolete in reverse.” In a rather round-about way, many of the artists have provided a visible analog for the Second Law of Thermodynamics, which extrapolates the range of entropy by telling us energy is more easily lost than obtained, and that in the ultimate future the whole universe will burn out and be transformed into an all-encompassing sameness.

(Robert Smithson, “Entropy And The New Monuments”)



The screenplay as form comes from that period of reading the world, the '80s and '90s mode of critical reading, undoing the purported seamless-ness of the world and its constitutive narratives, finding the cracks and fissures, the contractions and openings. A penetrating point into this is post-colonial studies, asking who speaks, who has power, who has agency. Such thoughts seem always with me, but at a very oblique angle. Because, as I express above, in search of autobiography, my biography has been an undoing, where "time as decay or biological evolution is eliminated becoming a series of motionless intervals."



This kind of time has little or no space; it is stationary and without movement, it is going nowhere, it is anti-Newtonian, as well as being instant, and is against the wheels of the time- clock. Flavin makes "instant-monuments"; parts for "Monument 7 for V. Tatlin" were purchased at the Radar Fluorescent Company. The "instant" makes Flavin's work a part of time rather than space. Time becomes a place minus motion. If time is a place, then innumerable places are possible. Flavin turns gallery-space into gallery time. Time breaks down into many times. Rather than saying, "What time is it?" we should say, "Where is the time?"

(Robert Smithson, "Entropy And The New Monuments")



Phot. Chart, Rudolph, Dresden

Between monument and ornament. Between immanence and transcendence.
Between.

These two images, the one above a work of Yvonne Rainer, below it one of Mary Wigman, give a good sense of my feelings here.

Though we may be done with the past, the past is not done with us.

Instead of causing us to remember the past like the old monuments, the new monuments seem to cause us to forget the future. Instead of being made of natural materials, such as marble, granite, or other kinds of rock, the new monuments are made of artificial materials, plastic, chrome and electric light. They are not built for the ages but against the ages. They are involved in a systematic reduction of time down to fractions of seconds, rather than in representing the long spaces of centuries. Both past and future are placed into an objective present. This kind of time has little or no space in it; it is stationary and without movement, it is going nowhere, it is anti-Newtonian, as well as being instant, and it is against the wheels of the time-clock ... [The] destruction of classical time and space is based on an entirely new notion of the structure of matter.

(Robert Smithson, "Entropy And The New Monuments")

This "new" image of time is, then, one in which the past is coextensive with the present, which itself is coextensive with the future.

And yet, or simultaneously, Smithson's description where

time as decay or biological evolution is eliminated — canceling out the notion of weight, and reverse the orientation of matter within the solid-state of inorganic time . . . This reduction of time all but annihilates the value of the notion of "action" in art.

In this, I am very much interested in the tragic.

46

**The Banal,
the Empty,
the Cool,
the Tragic**

I'd been watching a number of talks on the tragic by philosopher Simon Critchley. In them, he states:

Tragedy is the undergoing of a suffering that might permit an experience of truth that is neither, contemplative, or conceptual, it's not philosophical, nor is it empirical or scientific, but an experience of truth that emerges out of a visceral experience of a conflict.

Tragedy asks the questions: *What will happen to me? What is the right path of action? What shall I do?* Tragedy highlights what is perishable, what is fragile, what is slow moving about us.

In a world defined by relentless acceleration of information flows, flows that cultivate amnesia supplanted with the promise of a future guaranteed by the continual new, tragedy is a kind of braking system.

Like tragedy, art can also act as a braking system, a seeing emphatic system, a system to take up our senses and being, collective and individual. In the case of tragedy, rather than being pushed aside, a form forgotten, it increasingly comes to push its way back in against our desired progress.

Mistakes and dead-ends often mean more to these artists than any proven problem. Questions about form seem as hopelessly inadequate as questions about content. Problems are unnecessary because problems represent values that create the illusion of purpose. The problem of "form vs. content," for example, leads to illusionistic dialectics that become, at best, formalist reactions against content. Reaction follows action, till finally the artist gets "tired" and settles for a monumental inaction. The action-reaction syndrome is merely the leftovers of what Marshall McLuhan calls the hypnotic state of mechanism.

(Robert Smithson, "Entropy and the New Monuments")

Smithson goes on:

from this "undistinguished" run of architecture (that of the buildings of Park Avenue), as Flavin calls it, we gain a clear perception of physical reality free from the general claims of "purity and idealism." Only commodities can ford such illusionist values; for instance, soap is 99 44/100% pure, beer has more spirit in it, and dog food is ideal; all and all this mean such values are worthless. As the cloying effect of such "values" wears off, one perceives the "facts" of the outer edge, the flat surface, the banal, the empty, the cool, bland after blank; in other words, that infinitesimal condition known as entropy.

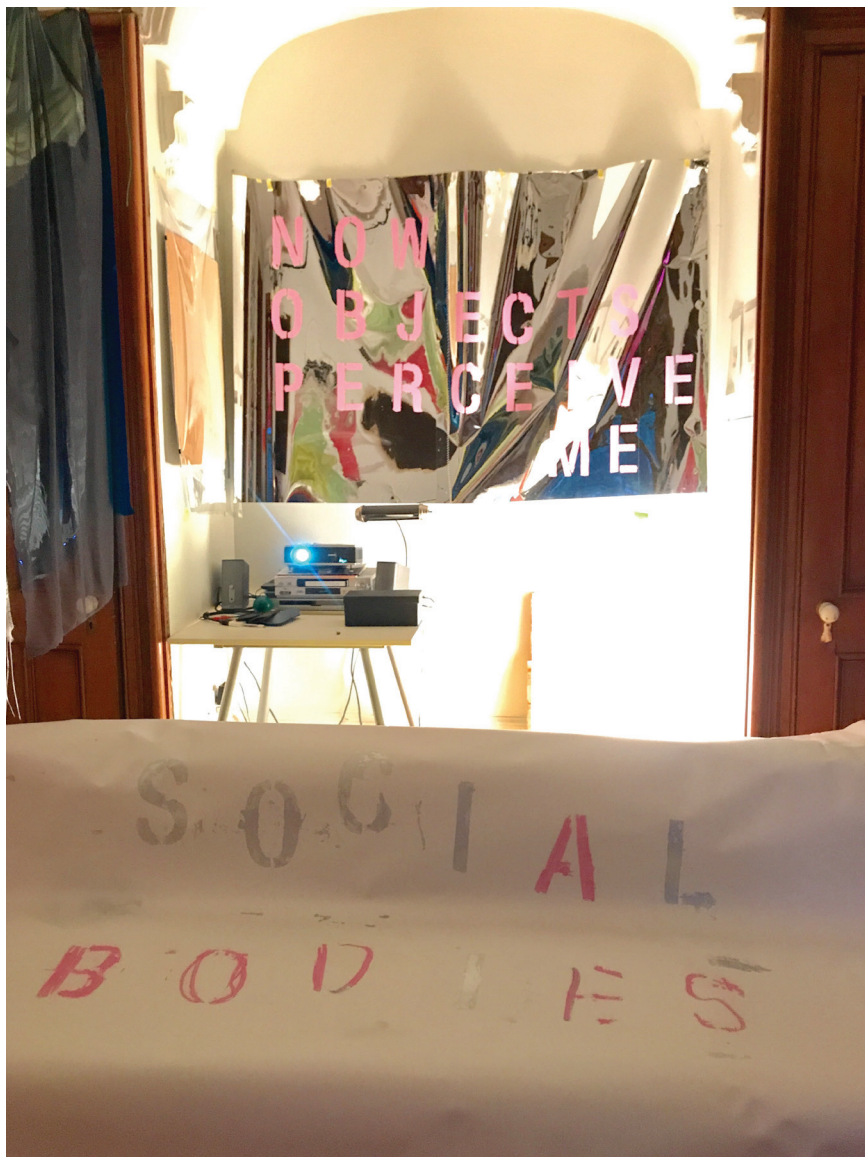
Now the "facts" of the outer edge can be contested with those cultural objects already in circulation, which Bourriaud notes when employed or engaged

the work of art takes on a script-like value.

I think Smithson and his generation reject such scripts wholesale. And it is a rejection that is so very absolute. It is beyond tragedy, beyond art. It makes me think of Reinhardt's statement that his black paintings were

the last paintings anyone can make.

Perhaps art is an attempt at the resolution of, even an avoidance of, the divided self, akin to what Critchley so well describes in tragedy as being the contestation of two equally valid claims: the incalculable play of equally floating and unstable claims. He states that what interests him is to decide on the legality of the act of the one and the validity of the protest of the other.





Though we must suffer, suffer into truth,

he writes of tragedy,

I think we must become “and, and, and,” a profuse multiplicity, that which undoes and becomes continually, relentlessly. Yes there will always be me, divided against myself, uncertain, unsure, unknowing. But then again there might also be me that contains and becomes multitudes, keeps becoming and no doubt through loss, suffering and grief.

“And peruse manifold objects, no two alike and every one good, The earth good and the stars good, and their adjuncts all good. I am not an earth nor an adjunct of an earth, I am the mate and companion of people, all just as immortal and fathomless as myself...”

We should be perplexed by art. We should always ask questions as to why and what and how. But not just ask, but let the intellect and cognition give way to our intuitions and our sense.

(notes taken from Simon Critchley’s talk at BYU, 2014:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tv3j9U0g0qQ>)

47

**Forms,
Appearances,
and the Tragic
(a first attempt)**

Titles (for exhibition)

A title both sums up and opens up a space of understanding of what is to be presented. *A Philosopher of Eminence (or is it immanence) or Behold the Man or Murder as One of the Fine Arts or What is Fragile, What is Slow Moving, What is Perishable or Form, Appearance, Imitation or They Do Not "Arrive" from "Elsewhere" or The Sensuous Presentation of the Absolute.*

Themes

the alphabet, language as material, letter forms, words as letter forms that reflect and or are transparent, folding, veiling, masking, covering inhabiting, topology, form, from striated to smooth, from variegated to folded and enfolded, opaque and transparent, to both reflect and to cover to uncover, to hide, the flesh of the word, the surface as skin, as never ending, as sensitive to light and temperature, limitless plenitude of living things, capaciousness of forms



What it will look like when I pack up for the show at the Meier building?

Listening to Simon Critchley's lectures on tragedy, where he describes in a lecture on Socrates and Plato forms, appearances and imitation. I wrote about this to give description to my most recent thoughts on those works that have more volume, more depth, can be approached in the round—thoughts which had occurred to me only after seeing them, seeing them as an ensemble. In working towards the show for the Grand Army Plaza building I could see in certain corners of the building in the gallery space an inset or jag that suggested a vitrine. Here I thought, ah, not just a screen, not just a fabric piece, hanging but a floating rectangle, transparent but floating, so I made one and then another and then another. And these were pure, if you like, and empty, a vessel, a container, a containment. Not only did light pass through it, it entrapped space, it defined a clear inside. And what was this, this inside-outside, this tabernacle, this enclosure, this space of emptiness? What was the space in there, inside the vitrine, empty, but all around me, the space between things, not empty, well empty but I did notice it as empty? So the space framed, shaped was an object, ah, but not just an object, a form, yes a form, this was form. This was something different. Whereas the work *In What Language to Come* was about the folding, the texture, the prismatic light falling through materials, these shapes suggested three-dimensional works, as Donald Judd would use the term for works somewhere between painting and sculpture.

I started to put objects, including gloves, plastic hospital bags, rubber hoses inside the vitrines. The vitrine sets off an object, keeping it away from being touched, keeping it encased, enclosed.





Then I took these objects outside the hanging fabric vitrines and hung them, suspended them above the ground by attaching them to strings I had extended from wall to wall, going lengthwise and widthwise. So there was nothing that touched the floor, nothing that had the solidity to be a self-standing object. Things were all held up, but not inflated like a pneumatic, or strung along as in a great number of individual parts of an exploded puzzle. Hanging, a set of connected suspended objects like a mobile in the sense of a Calder mobile or Sarah Sze sculpture installation, made of a network of hundreds of pieces. This is something again different.

This different I wanted to articulate along a line of thought of Forms, Appearances and Imitations. Ah, I thought, here is form, not here is a form. No, this is form. Obviously, this is the simplest of forms, and it is entirely man-made, and made by hand. Made by hand meaning made without tools of calculation, not drafted to then be fabricated, not made with a 3D software program. Because once you see form, everything is form, a form factor, a shape: and suddenly your mind sees it. Not the world as image, but the world as forms, as volumes and folds, as mass and gravity, as weight and bearing, as things, as thingness. And very soon this world of form, of things can get very complicated as forms can get very complex, not just as objects but form becoming, from snails to universes. Very quickly the mind goes not just to objects and forms but to space time.

With this in mind, listening to that part of Critchley's talk on tragedy. Not simply that explication of ideal forms, but tragedy as intimation and its condemnation, or exclusion — which he explains by way of Judith Butler and others, this idea of turning away from exaggerated lamentation, containing grief, the outpouring, the hysteria, of grief and its imitation in poetry and drama, especially tragic drama — because what is wanted, according to

Socrates, is comportment, reason, the appeal to one's higher self, one's restrained and measured self, to the reasonable, to reason, *logos*, logic, dispassion.

With this in mind, I thought through the work with reason being form, reason being abstracted from bodies, reason taking on a logic of its own, reason as pure form. Very soon reason became unreason. Reason became its own tragedy or more precisely, tragic. This made me think of Pasolini, reason's unreason, the tyranny of reason, reason gone mad.

So, on the one hand there was form, form in the sense of the specific objects of Donald Judd or earth objects of Smithson, his conceptual notion of site and non-site. For a moment let's leave aside the objects, the forms of Eva Hesse or Lee Bontecou, and why, well, because in the sense of Judd or Smithson, these soon become lyric, mythic, anthropologic, literary, and they want to stay clear of that, very clear of that. For Judd it's form all the way down, and the new industrial materials that create the suburban, forms with those materials that stand outside suburban human time. For Smithson, mineral and crystalline time, time outside human narrative. Forms and shapes and becomings outside



biology, which we can see in Hesse and Bontecou.

I read this in the context of minimalism, minimalism as a zero-degree sculpture, as in Carl Andre. And so the artists mentioned above, coming out of minimalism, have a very new sense of objects, process, materiality, objecthood, breaking further and further out of the Modernist tradition that comes from Europe. For purposes of contrast, think of Mathew Barney, Jason Rhodes, Sarah Sze: this is a kind of maximalism, where there is so much going on, materially and narratively, tending towards excess. This is not to say that it is excessive at all, it's just to locate the place of my concerns, which are thinking through, sensually re-imaging this moment of post-minimalism, post-conceptualism of a materiality that's rather simple, let's say, like Richard Tuttle. This, I think, is a reaction akin to kids now interested in analogue photography — with so much going with the computer, with computation, with software tools, including much of my early work in computational cinema, computer games, the image photograph (the immaterial image, the image of circulation, of social networks) in search, etc. there is desire for the tactile, embodied perception and being, along the lines so beautifully described in the work of Merleau-Ponty.

Now I think it's impossible to go back. We can't go back to the moment of material investigation that artists took on from the fifties to the seventies. I think we can take it as a point of departure, a re-orientation to materiality from which new things can be said. That's the exciting part, and said within a limit. And that's what all the writing is about, to find that limit that's productive.



Notes: a

In giving up the outline Cezanne was abandoning himself to chaos of sensation, which would upset the objects and constantly suggest illusions, as, for example, the illusion we have when we move our heads that objects themselves are moving—if our judgment did not constantly set these appearances straight.

He wanted to depict matter as it takes on form, the birth of order through spontaneous organization. He makes a basic distinction not between “the senses” and “the understanding” but rather between the spontaneous organization of the things we perceive and the human organization of ideas and sciences. We see things; we agree about them; we are anchored in them; and it is with “nature” as our base that we construct our sciences. Cezanne wanted to paint this primordial world, and his pictures therefore seem to show nature pure, while photographs of the same landscapes suggest man’s works, conveniences, and imminent presence. Cezanne never wished to “paint like a savage.” He wanted to put intelligence, ideas, sciences, perspective, and tradition back in touch with the world of nature which they were intended to comprehend. He wished, as he said, to confront the sciences with the nature “from which they came.”

By remaining faithful to the phenomena in his investigations of perspective, Cezanne discovered what recent psychologists have come to formulate: the lived perspective, that which we actually perceive, is not a geometric or photographic one. The objects we see close at hand appear smaller, those far away seem larger than they do in a photograph.

(Maurice Merleau-Ponty, “Cezanne’s Doubt”)

Notes: b

In Deleuze’s lecture on Spinoza, he wants to give us an understanding of Spinoza’s use of *affectus* and *affectio*. One concerns feeling and the other affect, that which affects us, has affect distinct from affection as in a feeling of closeness or tenderness.

(<http://deleuzelectures.blogspot.com/2007/02/on-spinoza.html>)



48

**Space,
Shape,
Volume and
Objecthood**





The more I explore materiality, building upon, beyond the tactile, beyond an object or scrim of light, towards something that has form and volume, something solid, immovable, impermeable, something fixed and absolute, the more I am confronted with the sense of things as mutable, mutational, contingent. The more I am interested in the state of in-between. A certain contingency or catastrophe, a falling apart while hanging together. Something seemingly casual and seemingly random. I can not commit to permanence, an object that is this one thing, even if it is the most minimalist of forms, a form without image, without allegory, without narrative. I can not commit to a specific object. Rather it must be an object unbecoming, an object in the midst of a hazard, an object that is prepositional.

On, about, in, despite, under, near, next, behind, below, toward, over, round, since, among, apart, except for—these prepositions show and indicate location in the physical world, in time. They indicate that in time *below* may become *above*, or *beside* *behind*. *In* might become *out*. The preposition suggests a state that can become another, when we don't know.

I think about this—the conceptualization of physical space distinct from a thing or part and parcel of the thingness of a thing. That is, how things take up space, how they fold and yield. Or stand still, hold still, stand firm. Think of stone and wood as opposed to felt and plastic, cloth and fiberglass, metal and cheesecloth, a pomegranate and a pumice stone, how each responds to temperature, pressure, light, air, water, time, let alone our touch. How these materials can be touched, formed and shaped and uphold that shape. The jellyfish in the sea and the jellyfish washed up on shore. The balloon in air and the balloon not blown up. Clouds just at the point of rain.

This is a material practice of art, not unlike cooking. Distinct from, let's say, manipulating code, or making a photograph, or pushing bytes about to make a digital painting. In a world surfeited with data (a material in itself to sculpt), my imbrication into the tactile and material, away from code and the image, towards touch, to feel the sensation of things has made what to make things with the least overdetermination. Such works could only be an indication. A suggestion, a presentation of the very thing they already were. The beautiful orange in orange felt, the layered nap and almost velour of it. Your eyes want to run your hands on it. The bright yellow of thin Latex, its texture next to another hue of yellow acrylic. One almost viscous, the other brittle, both against the grain of wood. I want to present the sensate qualities of these materials, to present them as such within certain vernaculars of painting and sculpture. To be clear, I don't wish to make paintings or sculpture, but to use their familiarity to present sensation.





The jellyfish is perfect, no shell, nothing but body.

Material and primary process are obviously analogous phenomena and similarly, functional language on its primary level of discourse is analogous to the esthetic practice of poetry (as opposed to its secondary, mythical level of ideological appropriation). Broodthaers perceives the various processes that lead into plastic concretion as processes of reification, commodification and ideological appropriation. These are the criteria that determine the object-nature of the work of art under capitalism — its shell, its mold, its framework its form of institutional circulation and commercial distribution is understood as a hidden mode of alienation and domination.

(Benjamin Buchloh, "Marcel Broodthaers, Allegories of the Avant Garde," 1980)

As precarious and contingent as my shaping goes, and as much as I want to shape the event of the contingent, a shaping that gives forward a contingent state, an in between, that present materiality as something in and of itself, for itself, I know fully that the materials I've been using, are, in some sense, already highly realized as industrialized products. In this state, they are to be employed for a number of specific uses. Neoprene and Latex to contain water flow, silicone to manage heat surfaces, corrugate for roofing, and so on.

To see the contingent, I want to contrast it with the fixed, the more precise, if that is the right word. Perhaps better: the more certain. Here I can see the appeal of the crystalline. Snowflakes, diamonds, and table salt. Now a void becomes a solid, a fold, a right angle, a structure standing, even the simplest cube or rectangle. I decide to go to a woodshop and work with someone who had helped me saw the hardback books I used for my paper sculptures. Here I will have the proper tools.

I spend weeks gathering materials. Coroplast, Mylar, mesh, neoprene, felt, paper, corrugate, bubble-wrap. I begin model making, tall and slender versus square and rectangular, hard versus soft.

I fall in love and am intrigued by a 4-section form of a Manfred Pierce wooden sculpture. I try and figure the ratio of top length to bottom length to get the cross diagonals to protrude a little. I attempt several models. But I don't want to work with wood.

I want to make something collapsable, foldable, portable. Instead of nails, screws, or a mold, I will use Velcro. Instead of a staple gun, safety pins and clips. Something deep in me seems adverse to the finality of a thing. That it will be in one and only one state. It will be made, as opposed to ongoingly making itself.

Nevertheless I persist in confronting this made work, this finished work, these finished works of Pierce. Highly material, very clever and playful. These are things, these are objects, persistent things. There is no allegory, no mythos, just Pierce's dexterity with material.

Corrugated plastic is hard and brittle. The corrugate very much part of a industrial modular construction system for mass deployment. Unlike the porosity of brick or the grain of wood, it is cold and harsh, snapping and crackling when going through the saw. Like Mylar, it has an alien nature.

It's this meditation upon the materiality of corrugate and mylar that intrigues me most. The tools that make it. I see the project of Roxy Paine so clearly at this moment. The thing that makes the thing with the thing is the thing. There is no final form, just forms, processes making forms, machines making and making. I am going to put a plastics factory in the Tate Turbine Hall. Ship an abandoned factory to the hall and reconstruct it.

I persist with persistence for a bit and make some things hard and fixed. This fixity, the very thing I wanted to move away from, the large framed photographic print, an object in itself, is here, weighty, taking up space, insistent.

Time as decay or biological evolution is eliminated by many of these artists; this displacement allows the eye to see time as an infinity of surfaces or structures, or both combined, without the burden of what Roland Barthes calls the "undifferentiated mass of organic sensation." The concealed surfaces in some of Judd's works are hideouts for time. His art vanishes into a series of motionless intervals based on an order of solids. Robert Grosvenor's suspended structural surfaces cancel out the notion of weight, and reverse the orientation of matter within the solid- state of inorganic time. This reduction of time all but annihilates the value of the notion of "action" in art. Mistakes and dead-ends often mean more to these artists than any proven problem. Questions about form seem as hopelessly inadequate as questions about content. Problems are unnecessary because problems represent values that create the illusion of purpose. The problem of "form vs. content," for example, leads to illusionistic dialectics that become, at best, formalist reactions against content. Reaction follows action, till finally the artist gets "tired" and settles for a monumental inaction. The action-reaction syndrome is merely the leftovers of what Marshall McLuhan calls the hypnotic state of mechanism. According to him, an electrical numbing or torpor has replaced the mechanical breakdown.

(Robert Smithson, "Entropy And The New Monuments," *Collected Writings*.)



The uncarved block is wiser than any utensil that can be carved from it.

(Lao Tzu)

Rose: The anti-Michelangelo.

The uncarved block is wiser than any utensil that can be carved from it.

(Lao Tzu)

It's the potentiality of being anything. Once you turn something into something, its universal usage is over.

(Carl Andre)

Moving downwards from the Idea of the bed to the painted bed, one moves from reality to illusion, from truth to lies, from God to the painter. The philosopher must move in the opposite direction, and while doing so should ignore the painted bed altogether. The knowledge of the Beautiful and of the Good—both embodied in the Ideas or eternal Forms—is too serious a moral goal to be waylaid by art and its dubious representations. Of course, the whole conversation is, in a sense, also a deliberate artifice created by Plato.

(Aveek Sen)

At the same time, I want to make felt or neoprene into a cube. I put a yard of black neoprene on the table and in the center a foot square cardboard box. I sort of wrap it about the box, only to quickly discover that I don't want to wrap the neoprene or felt around the paper box. I am not interested in a wrapped present. I think I want a cube, but I don't really. Certainly the neoprene doesn't want such cuteness. I don't want to make the neoprene submissive to my will. I want it to stretch and pull itself, I want it to extend itself, let it go, find its shape. I want to make a pastry, not a box. I remove the box, and into the center, I put almost origami sheets of scored Coroplast, a kind of strutting system.



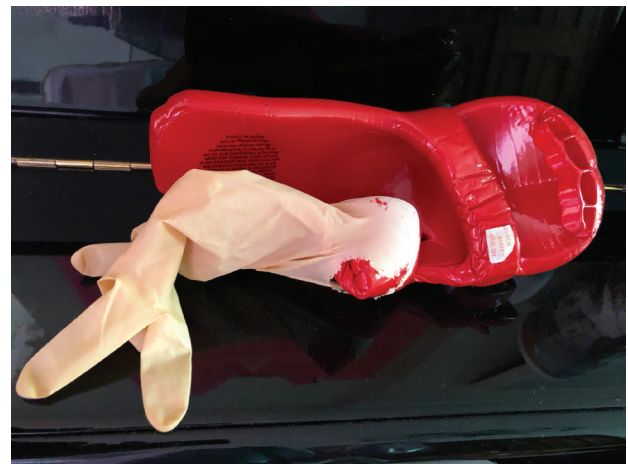
4. Found Objects, Combines, Assemblages

In Park Slope and Prospect Heights, Brooklyn, someone is always putting something on the sidewalk: books, old bikes, toys, action heroes, Playmobil, cooking utensils, chairs, furniture, boxes, all kinds of cardboard, lightsabers, sports gear, clothing, all kinds of children's toys and much more.

Using found objects and rethinking them, combining them with unrelated objects, stacking them, cutting them, arranging them has been done from the readymades of Marcel Duchamp, to the Surrealists' incongruous concoctions like the fur on the tea cup, to Robert Rauschenberg's combines, to Joseph Beuys reliquary objects, to the iconic vacuum cleaner or floating basketballs of Jeff Koons, or the airborne ping pong ball of Damien Hirst, the assemblage sculptures of Isa Genzken. They are as much found and altered as they are made from wood, marble, or steel, designed from the ground up. In this sense, found objects and collage has become the major mode of sculpture today.

To give this a go, I have made a few of these below. As I have said, there are many, many, many art history examples.

So the young students collect as many varied things as they can and bring them to the class. Each student then is given three or four items from another student to work with, kind of like a cooking show. They have five minutes to make something from the items they have been given. They then photograph the items for an Instagram post with a title. Three student judges discuss for five minutes what they like, and we repeat this again and again.



Strategies for objects images and situations

-not concealment or transparency but containment congealing coagulation -in this there is the idea of not wrapping but holding with in.

-thinking of Yoko Ono's piece, you and me, two condoms filled with water, hanging in front of a white 16x20 white canvas like breakfast sausages.

-extend the idea of transparency into the dissolve

-dissolve between mineral and organic

-transparency can also be overlay, different than the dissolve as in seeing figures on the ground -but which figures, broodthaers

-what do these 'operations' do

-what do i want them to do

-to see again the environment

-to see again the photographic

-to see photography seeing

-to see the frame as the event of constituting or constitutive of the the object or event it frames

-there is then, no object per se

a. Conceptual

-think of the space, the white cube, as a sanitorium, think of it as a planet, both human and non human, inside the planetarium inside this white cube what is desired and what is made desirable a neuroscience of desire



b.Cinematographic

-think of the install as cinematographic, know that apparatus or program format of the Meier building exceeds any the 'art objects' of the purported gallery, which is simply a concocted idea and conceit to decorate the Meier lobby whose program of community rooms is most likely underused, though nannies to keep from the cold in the kiddie room.

-this is to say, my work presses up against this context.

-how do I want the outside of the building to show the works

-and from the revolving glass door to open up to the lobby and from there build the scale of the works in ways that give a certain sense and feeling. and what feeling.

-the play of color moves to the same colors now objects-wrapped stage props from some general narrative of natural topologies and disaster preparation - emergency relief hospital but clean



c. Imaginings of the space, the feeling of it, install plan

- neuroscience of sensation, color, materials, scale
- a mise-en-scene of sense, taste not as in tasteful, but tasty, tasting, imbibing, touching
- the objects and arrangement of objects give a mood, an ambience, need to do something big and bold, including large fabric work, hanging from ceiling
- post human whales fungus
- sanatorium, very creepy
- between monument and ornament
- ambient light box (desire of the art committee to use the window space will accentuate the works relation and interaction with this ambience)

d. Scale

- what's bigger, what's smaller than the human body -1 to 1 relation to the body of the beholder



e. Between Absorption and Theatre

-suspended; between ground and ceiling, between humble textile materials and grand architectonics, between painting and sculpture, object and language.

-what are the objects, the works for the various spaces

-what is the argument



f. Visualization

-preview by selecting and printing images of objects for their respective rooms -what surrounds and what's inside

-how are things displayed, where are things found, how do things read the space, windows, ceiling,

g. Actual Space

-windows, which works in which windows

*-rooms, which works in which rooms, floors, ceiling walls, windows, revolving door -what is in lobby, long long hallway and kitchen are photographs and inside object and sculptures
smaller and bigger*

h. Rooms

- turnstile door, colored plastic or see through mirror mylar, draw people in -lobby
- hall way corridor
- living room
- billiard room
- side window
- front window
- kitchen (print lollipops or anatomies or make blackboard in colored chalk, make a wish, magnetic blackboard, a set of instructions in a box, imaginary cake recipe, recipe for a cake, an outlandish cake)



i. Along the spectrum of form (form-object)

- light objects
- soft forms
- constructed objects
- narrative objects (zen float tank, greek column, white sugar cube
- found objects
- decorative objects
- imploded/exploded objects or deformations
- interactive objects
- concealed or veiled objects

- concealed or veiled narratives images pictures
- language objects
- variable objects
- elastic objects
- found or assembled objects

j. Along the spectrum of seeing, concealing

- text objects (writing)
- light pen objects
- mylar cape cod
- wrapped tree
- wrapped shopping cart
- wrapped mannequin
- not the tree, not the shopping cart, nor the mannequin, present just the wrapper
- draped large watercolors
- can print more images on aluminum two inches off wall drape w shear zipper transparencies -the dialectic of site and non site, this simultaneity of both places, held together in space place and the mind.
- the thought inside a thought. the thing inside a thing
- writing and sight Light Pen
- how can the light pen and plastic overlays read or mark up a specific theme or set of images. maybe a particular archive
- memories of photography
- seeing (make 2 large)



k. Along the spectrum of materiality, tactility

-plastic, paper, rubber, neon, neoprene

l. Ambience of it all

*-floating solids
-floating vitrines
-hanging panels
-aluminum cut outs printed on both sides -mobiles
-paper cut outs or drawings, maybe
-5 life preservers
-conceptual photos*



m. Philosophy

-Not Form Not Objects but Materiality -Not Objects but Space

n. Qualities

- order versus noise*
- messy over order*
- found mixed with constructed*
- chance over determination -process over finish*
- form or deformed*
- object ness over lyric or narrative*



49

**The Mundi,
an Immensity
Possessing
No Dimension,
a New Form of
Cultural Exchange**

With the increasingly abstract exchanges of a technocratic society, I want to make the abstract or immaterial concrete as an immaterial material work. I want to take the idea of a distributed ledger, of cryptography, and to give this abstraction a realm for public participation, political and aesthetic.

For Rancière art can become engaged in the political because the aesthetic presumes equality and enables people to step outside of their prescribed roles, causing a destabilization of roles, a redistribution of the sensible. The aesthetic experience is an active one, not a passive one, which all people are capable of having and which allows people to imagine political configurations that are otherwise inconceivable. Through the aesthetic people can question the prevailing social distribution of roles and the way that society allocates power and authority. They can be the voice of “floating subjects that deregulate all representations of places and portions,” thus destabilizing normative functions and behaviours. The political implications of the aesthetic can be adapted to other situations.

(Samantha Mallett)



... it seems oddly perverse to insist on an experience of art as limited to a certain scale or to a particular type of observation. The “publicness” of the museum, has after all, historically been at the heart of its mission, and though we may occasionally lose one form of artistic experience, surely there is the potential for others.

(Jessica Morgan, curator at the Tate Modern)

*a cryptocurrency as a work of art
an installation and conceptual piece of art
white paper and coin architecture on request*

Since it looks like cryptocurrencies will remain a part of the art-industry debate for some time, I saturated myself in the minutiae so you don't have to. And after coming up for air, I can say this: While there are still many, many questions about their adoption, implementation, and value, cryptocurrencies have the potential to transform multiple facets of the art world, from the authentication of digital works to the protection of transactions to the creation of new forms of cultural exchange.

(Tim Schneider, "Cryptocurrencies, Explained: The Beginner's Guide the Art World Needs Right Now," *Artnet*)

Even while I work on objects, making them with my hands, feeling my way about the sensate and material, I am at the same time drawn back to the network and the immaterial. The forever transforming and morphing realm of the network includes value creation and destruction, value in its appearance and disappearance. Values of trust, transaction, experience, opinion, and so on.

Much of the work of the artist is making things that at one moment appear everyday and ordinary in the next appear as something entirely else. What was once a dead shark on the beach put in a vitrine in a gallery becomes an object, a metaphor to contemplate death. Things that are most ordinary and banal—a snow shovel, a basketball, the Empire State Building—are suddenly seen, seen anew, as if for the first time. This no doubt is one of the powers of photography: it allows us to see ourselves, to see what's right in front of us. It allows us to stop and look, to stop things in order to look at them. The frame of art, the frame of the photograph can confer on the most ordinary moment or ordinary object, with the simplest gesture, something entirely else, transforming perception and value.

Like the sleight of hand of a magician or visual illusionist, ART can be defined, provocatively, as an intangible quantity that transforms an ordinary object into something worth many times more than its material value.

In a participatory work of art, the audience is engaged directly in the creative process, as co-authors, editors, and observers of the work. In such art, it is often the experience of the audience that becomes the true object or subject of the work.

I have been thinking of the blockchain as a participatory work of art. Think of it: the blockchain is an encrypted distributed ledger wherein value is held not in one place but across a number of locations and participants. Each transaction on that ledger is made, verified, and recorded in a continually updated shared database, in a new inviolable block.

As a distributed computing system, blockchains are very well suited for the recording of events: you might say a participatory recording, a recording on a distributed ledger managed by a peer-to-peer or participatory network collectively adhering to a protocol for validating new blocks.

This activity itself, can be considered in this case, the work of art.

Think of an art auction as a constructed situation, one in which only one person, in the end, will own the work of art, a work made by one artist. The value of that work will be ongoing within the confluence of a small market of collectors, investors and opinion makers. But the work of art will always be one and the same as it goes from owner to owner.

The art auctions, the fairs, art works and their markets, it's all an enormous business—but few get to participate. The public's familiarity and experience of art is most often through the museum and is most most often a passive experience.

Art is equally, a huge, and for many, an arcane business. A business where value is not very much understood and determined by a select few. The public likes art. And the public likes money. As it is, it's very few artists that make a splash in auction, and whose market and work the public comes to know.



What if every person, globally, could experience the excitement of sitting in the front row of Sotheby's in New York, London, Hong Kong, Shanghai, Abu Dhabi, bidding on their own masterpiece? Driving up the value of the work of art. the work of art they are also making?

This work in auction, on the exchange, inside the blockchain, a blockchain is our work of art. The coin and its transaction: a participatory art work. Such a work is something much more than buying a ticket to the MoMA or the Tate. It is participating (for the first time. for many) in the ownership and simultaneously the creation of a contemporary work of art.

Let's take a step back and talk about value, how we value things. For simplicity's sake, let's say there are utility and pleasure, what we need and what we enjoy. We need a map to get round, but we also need and want enjoyment and pleasure.

What if a coin, a currency's, only value was the valuing of it, in and for itself? Its value was creating its value. Just as Yves Klein did with his work "the immaterial pictorial sensibility." A value you see him transacting in the image below.



We go to a museum and see works of art we enjoy. That enjoyment is its own reward. We can't use that experience other than, well, describing our pleasure to others, feeling uplifted, distracted, being pleased.

Investing, creating, and reaping value brings enormous pleasure to people. At the same time losing value is terrifying. An art auction both allows the pleasure of connoisseurship, the sport of acquisition, and the building of cultural equity and financial profit. At the least, a play at the market. In fact, works of art over a million dollars rarely lose their value, and, in fact, many have gained tremendous value. A value and asset for investors, for collectors. And if the work does not become increasingly valuable, the work of art can be its own pleasure. So in a sense you can't lose.

Up until now the general public, who can participate in the stock market, couldn't participate in ownership at the high end of the art market. Nor the top 100 artists valued by auction databases. They simply can't afford it. Think about that — while anyone can buy a share of Apple, the general art lover has, up till now, been excluded from the art market. But what if the everyman could not only participate, but, through their participation, create a contemporary work of art? A work continually collectively made, and continually bought and sold.

Carrying on from conceptual art, the floating point coin is the work of art.

In a long tradition of the immaterial work of art, this art has no physical form and exists only in the network. But it has an actual form, an actual and transactional reality. The work is experiential and not held in one place, but held collectively, aesthetically, conceptually and financially.

This is a very new kind of contemporary work of art, far beyond network art. Built on the new network of the blockchain.

As such, it has a very new materiality and value.

2

A coin logo for a real currency trading on various exchanges.

When I mentioned this idea to my sculptor friend Elliot, he was very humored by it, and soon the idea took hold. He mentioned it to *ArtNet* and asked them to be in touch with me. I spoke with Tim Schneider for forty minutes or so and the following week he posted the first of installment of a three-part article on Cryptocurrencies and art.

In the meantime, we designed the Mundi coin. Something visual and tangible.

I set about researching how to write a white paper, design a coin architecture, and create an ICO, an initial coin offering.

Having no intention of truly creating an innovative take on the blockchain, I read that the most important thing was getting the word out. Creating a community around the project, miners, investors, traders, all of them participating in the project as a work of art.



After reviewing three or four white papers and putting up an ad for a freelancer, I reached the end of my know-how and asked another friend if he knew someone who knows how to structure an ICO and the coin incentives to get it to the market—on an exchange, into a wallet, etc.

He wrote to his colleague:

It is not a service or DApp (DApp has its backend code running on a decentralized peer-to-peer network) it is a coin as art, the experience of the art market minus the actual art....these are conceptual artists. They think they can bring \$1-3M pre-sale to the table. But they don't know what exactly to tell their potential investors.

Here is his follow-up note to us.

Just had an exchange with Edward, the CEO of Anatha (<https://anatha.co/>). He likes your idea — a fresh angle, in his words; I only give him a very high level perspective — and feels confident he can be of real help.

But that involves a \$250K consulting service agreement. For that \$250K, you'd get:

- > Access to our team, research, and a full ICO plan. Ill also shop their deal around Pre-ICO if it has legs.
- > Ill include their token in our multi currency wallet and position them to get on exchanges.
- > Ill also float a Market Maker fund post ICO for the project if they take me on as their Chief Strategy Officer. (This means he'd put the money/coin raised in the ICO into a fund to manage it moving forward; so you understand, the ICO raised ETH and BTC; he'd manage that as a growth fund — investing in ICOs, buying and selling, etc — to continue to fund the project)

If you can put that \$250K together, I'd put you in touch with the Anatha lawyer —

Ian — who'd create the contract and then they'd move quickly on this.
What say you?

I began to think of the \$250,000 as the cost of fabricating this work of art. It would be a legal and financial instrument.

3



Besides being on an exchange could there be a real world installation of this very conceptual work.

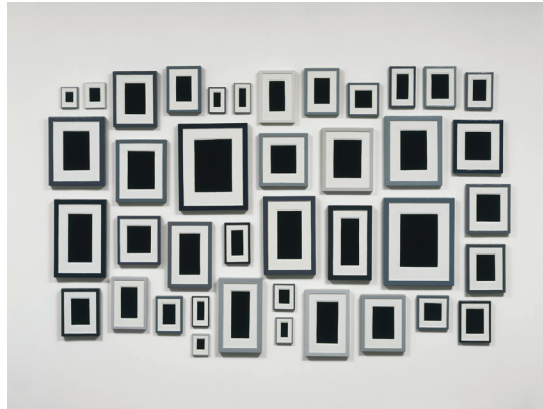
I had read something about autonomous stores, and found this image above.

Shanghai's self-driving grocery store offers drone delivery, automated payment and checkout - and can detect stock shortages and re-stock itself.

From the lighting to the uniform color and same repeated red objects, there is something in this image that seems right.

It suggests something environmental, mass produced, a concept store, concept art, cold and neon, solitary but participatory and transactional.

Something about it—art as a surrogate of art like this Allan McCollum, unique but the same:



Or this Félix González-Torres. Each candy a eucharist. The body, blood and sugar of art:



I like the multiple and distributed. The distributed ledger that continually is mined and computed, writing itself. How to performatively bring this into the project?

Maybe through a Hologram.



Art World

Cryptocurrencies, Explained: Why Artists Are Already Leaving Bitcoin Behind for Something Bigger

Why cryptocurrencies and the blockchain are becoming a favorite medium for the digital avant-garde.

SHARE

Tim Schneider, February 6, 2018



Arkin explained Real Salvador Mundi as a means of “taking back possession of this image after [the painting] sells for this crazy amount. That’s what Marc told me was involved in cryptocurrencies, as well.” In other words, the goal was to use mass participation to democratize a masterpiece alienated from the public by the apex of the collecting class. So what could be more natural than adding a themed cryptocurrency to the product line?

Enter what, for brevity’s sake, its creators shorthand as Mundicoin.

It sounds like a lark at first. However, Lafia, a conceptual artist deeply engaged with new technologies and participatory art, had been thinking through blockchain’s aesthetic possibilities for some time. In particular, he had become intrigued by the prospect of “making a work that is its own value.”

Value Proposition

Unlike Bitchcoin, Arkin and Lafia’s cryptocurrency is only backed by a philosophical conceit—which is to say, no tangible asset at all. Like all conceptual art, it becomes an artwork through the collective participation of a willing audience. It is only valuable—either culturally or financially—if enough people agree it is. As Lafia explained, “There’s no utility, but you can still buy it and sell it.”

This dynamic informs even the most traditional works, whether we’re talking about *Three Studies of Lucian Freud* or *Salvator Mundi* itself. A select group of interested parties builds value in objects through scholarship, exhibitions, and other awareness-raising efforts. But these efforts only matter if a somewhat larger audience accepts their message. If *Salvator Mundi* goes on a world tour but no one gasps in its presence in a viral video, was it really a masterpiece?

From a valuation standpoint, then, Lafia argues that what mainly distinguishes Mundicoin from *Salvator Mundi* is transparency. Everyone who literally buys into his and Arkin’s cryptocurrency “is in on the joke. The [valuation] mechanism”—specifically, its underlying absurdity—“is clear, and that’s what blockchain is all about. Collective participation is integral to the underlying technology.”

50

**Modular,
Mutable,
Notional
and
Performative**

Of movement and light, of lightness and sense. Sense and sensibility.
Wholeness, limitlessness, and eternity. An oceanic feeling.

An artist always feels uneasy when called upon to speak of his own work. It should speak for itself, particularly when it is valid.

What can I do? Stop now?

No, what I call "the indefinable pictorial sensibility" absolutely escapes this very personal solution.

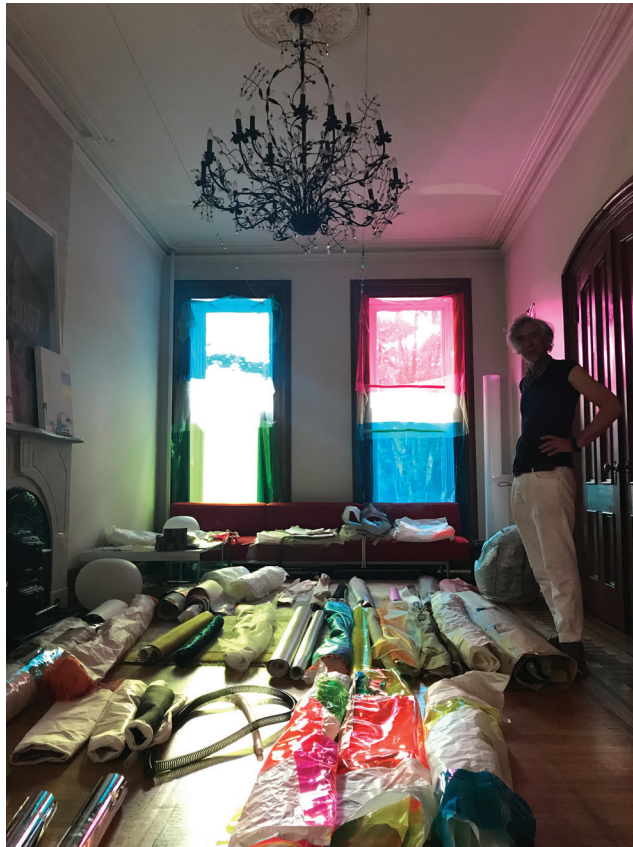
So...

I think of those words I was once inspired to write. "Would not the future artist be he who expressed through an eternal silence an immense painting possessing no dimension?"

(Yves Klein, "The Chelsea Hotel Manifesto")

Andre strove for a three-dimensionality that depends on the unattached organization of modular elements in a predetermined configuration, which is often a grid rather than a finite fixed immutability.

(Carl Andre with Barbara Rose, *Interview Magazine*, 2013)



But why a grid?

It only exists as art at the time that it's put together and presented.

(Barbara Rose)

Well, yes and no, and yes.

Every six months or so, I take down my studio. I pack all the work up and put it away.



I mop the floor.



Until nothing. Nothing's there. Nothing but the space, the light. The once was, that is no longer. It is a leap into the void.



By maintaining myself at a specific and obligatory distance from the surface to be painted, I am able to resolve the problem of detachment.

(Yves Klein, "The Chelsea Hotel Manifesto")

What is the problem of detachment but a leap into the void? To be detached is to be comfortable with nothing, with being as such, with being as nothing and everything at the same time. In this sense, material becomes immaterial.



The void moves between being pleasant and a sinking feeling. A vastness and an emptiness. I both want to stay in that space for a while, for a long while, and at the same time I want to fill it up.

Detachment is a practice.

2. From Object to Image

As everything is packed away, I am left with images. With these words.



But then, something unexpected always happens.



I see things I had not seen. Relationships between things. And all too soon I am in the fray of it.



It is necessary to create and recreate a constant physical fluidity in order to receive the grace which allows a positive creativity of the the void.

(Yves Klein)



Always a relation. One body and another. A movement of forces. Intensities. Intensivities. Material and psychological.



Bound, and unbound. Bound, even in an in-between state. At a limit. For a moment. Neither the spaceless time of Smithson's hidden folds of time, crystalline time, nor decay.



Perhaps, a rhizomatic horizontal time.



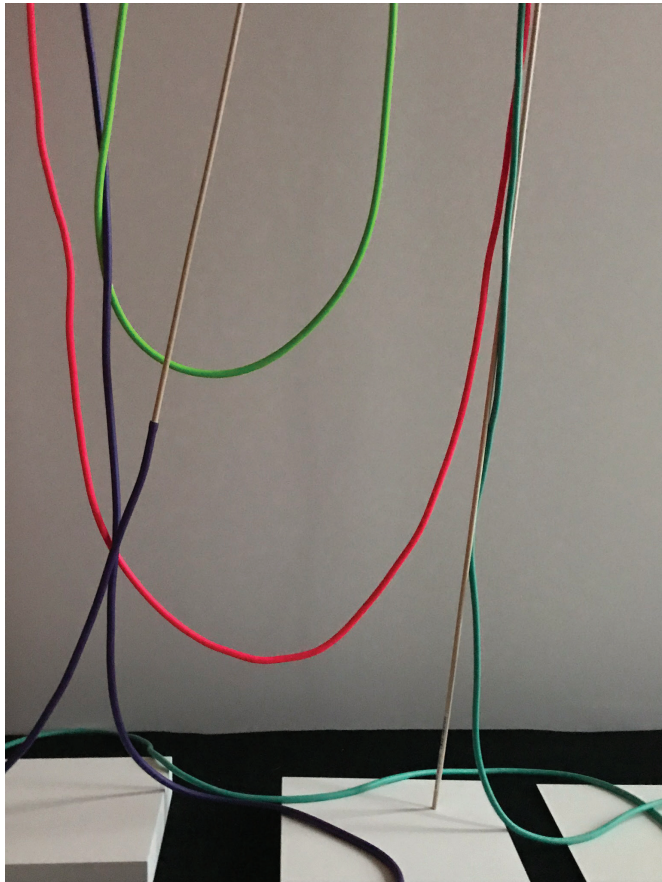


Always a *mise-en-scène*, always relational, always becoming, always embodied, always with the viewer, viewing its own now, apperception. Odd as that sounds, one with something vulnerable like you, you and me, between you and me, me becoming me, becoming other, becoming, being. Desiring that becoming, sensational, sensate, alive to sense, to finality, again, a limit.

My hands see many things. My sight touches many things. My body moves, towards, with, about, unto, around, between—the object, its being, its signals, its sense. I commune with it, putting it on.

Light, wind, sky.





To read the work of art is to be with it. Participation, then, is an embodied reading, being, sensation of the gesture of my *raison d'être* of the work, of working, of being. The work will never be mine, even if I am the author. I am not. I am the agent. I am the seduction. The medium that is worked.



51

Of Reward
and the
Beautiful

*Form, Appearance (phenomena), Imitation (representations) or
useless, beautiful, and poetic things of the world or Experience
of the Pleasant, of Reward and of the Beautiful
(a second go)*

On this rainy afternoon, I want to sketch out some thoughts of late.

Over the last few months I've been thinking about Forms, Appearances and Representations as I see myself and my work. A step back from depiction (representation and imitation), to see things as phenomena (the appearance of things in and for themselves) and from there, open a space to give view to the materiality and idea of forms.



In his essay “An Analysis of the Work of Art,” Joshua Taylor makes a distinction between the subject matter, the “what’s it about?” and the visual form of a work. Taylor writes

To keep from confusing what we normally call the subject matter of a work—the identifiable objects, incidents, or suggested outside experiences that we recognize—with the more complete aspect, taking as it were, the part for the whole, it might be useful to adopt the term “expressive content” to describe that unique fusion of subject matter and specific visual form which characterizes the particular work of art.

Of course the two, form and subject matter, are intertwined and inextricable. Sometimes forms themselves can be subjects and appearances in of themselves. I don’t want to get lost in the idea of Platonic forms, forms as idealized and immaterial, or imposed from without as ideas, but rather form with

virtualities that can become actual, one in which matter is already pregnant or endogenous with morphogenetic capabilities, therefore capable of generating form on its own.

(Manuel De Landa, “Deleuze and the Genesis of Form”)

In this sense form is both an actuality and virtuality, an actuality that can come to be, and is always already becoming. I want to state this up front, because I want to explore the notion of the work of art as that which is and that which it can become. That which is and the which can become undone.

When I started with this work, I kept thinking of Chinua Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart*. Things themselves and things falling apart, becoming other than themselves. Have a look at Robert Smithton’s *Spiral Jetty*, or the sculpture of Robert Morris or Eva Hesse, both of which are in a state of entropy, forever changing, forever, slow as it might seem, falling apart, falling into something else. Contrast this for a moment with the absolute scale and rigidity of objects made Jeff Koons, the balloon that’s not a balloon, the balloon that becomes the Eiffel Tower. It wants to resist time, to have a permanence, at the very least as a thing. Oddly as things fall apart we insist they are stable, we try to hang on to them, make them permanent. Photographs work that way, we think of them as though we’ve gotten hold of something. We got it. Time, memory, being. It’s there. But what’s there? The form factor of the photograph.

I read a variation of the following somewhere online,

Form is any positive element opposed to the negative elements we consider space.

This is something very interesting. We know that most of the universe is dark matter. All the space around us, the space between things, well, what is it? It’s space without a form, the space we don’t see, don’t pay attention to, because we don’t bump into it, we don’t walk around it, it’s air, I suppose. We are in the dark about

it. That's the form we don't think about. I think of it as a kind of foam. So form, forms that are "there," like the couch, the stove, the bicycle I ride, the mountain I climb, the shoes I use to climb it, forms and form factors or form forming.

So forms and things, forms as things (forms, formats, be they social structures, geologic forms, popsicles, galaxies) don't go on forever, as is. Forms contain the past, present and future-to-be. If we look at a generation of artists, mostly Americans, fifty years ago, that includes Donald Judd, Robert Smithson, Richard Serra, Robert Morris, Eve Hesse, and many many others, the post-Minimalists, one of the terms used for new work is "three-dimensional works" somewhere between painting and sculpture. Another term of Smithson's specifically is site and non site, here and there, the actual and the fragment, the part and the whole. Attuned to these materially acute and sensitive investigations (and I apologize for this extreme shorthand here), attuned to the specifics of materials, let's say rocks and crystals or felt or lead, each begins, over time, to change, to discolor, or let go, fold into itself, take on new shapes, Contrary to the permanent, the stable, the forever, they become often to the nightmare of museum conservators or collectors.

One passing note here, and most important to me, is the later work of Carl Andre. He gets a commission from the Tate. He arrives in London. He buys ordinary bricks or small uniform sheets of metal, fabricated at a commercially available size. He takes the lot of them to the museum. He arranges them this way, or that way or this and that way. Any which way. The public is discomfited by this. And in the end Andre, to the consternation or delight, who knows, of the museum, says "you have the bricks, do what you want with them." Some find this terribly upsetting. I find this exciting.

For Deleuze, the possible is "that which does not exist but might," whereas the virtual is real "but has a wholly different character from that which we consciously experience" (the actual). I see this as a continuum and want to make an art that moves along, accommodates and expresses that continuum. In other words Forms, Appearances, and Representations are not distinct realms, but held within each other, become each other, visible and viable. Time is an illusion, a magic trick of here, look here, it's here. But here is always elsewhere, that's what smiths wanted to tell us, sight and non-sight, here is there and everywhere. Here to go.

With this in mind, with computation, variability, becoming, entropy, gravity in mind what and why is object of art a singular and fixed object. Why do we have this idea? What is inherent to this idea? The object is never fixed in the sense that we can never step into a pair of Van Gogh's shoes twice. We are never the same when we see the work of his shoes.

Characteristics of specific visual form that Taylor describes in great detail (which include line, proportion, shape, texture, plane, volume, mass, color, scale, rhythm, each of which and together have affect and meaning) have expression.

With this concept of expressive content, he wants to draw our attention to the affective resonance in the very the shape of things, the material means by which tactile impressions are made. Simply, forms, shapes, finishes, surfaces,

volumes, colors, spaces of enclosure, opacity, light have affect. The color red, for example, has the effect of making an object seem heavier than it is. Green, blue, and blue-green are known as receding colors; they suggest coolness. Take this sentence from *Under the Volcano*:

The walls of the town, which is built on a hill, are high, the streets and lanes tortuous and broken, the roads winding.

The perception or the sensation of the picture this creates in our imagination is quite strong. You feel the space described and can imagine being there. With an object or material work of art, you are in the presence of something that resonates affect. Think only of the sense of enclosure and suffocation in the sentence above and the corridor installations of Bruce Nauman.

In George Kubler's *The Shape of Time: Remarks on the History of Things*, he gives us a sense of things as iterations in a series, the possibility of space that involves a long continuum. Works and shapes and forms of art explore and probe the space of their possibility. Artists, inventors, and societies explore these spaces and forms for a time and then try others. It's a non-linear process, where out of sequence these possibility spaces, seemingly exhausted, come back to have more possibility, more expression to be discovered. Things have shapes and shapes themselves, no doubt culturally specific, give forth certain feelings. There is an expressivity to shapes and forms.

Working with materials, rather than digital files, images, even print images, or fabrications made by others halfway round the world, made from a drawing or schematic of mine, and spending the last several years now off the computer and working with my hands, working with materials paper, all sorts of paper, organza, Latex, neoprene, silicone, plaster, plastics, zippers, chiffon, cardboard, Coroplast, tubing, paint, Mylar, gum rubber, and much more, at first in a two-dimensional way and now more shaping forms, I sense the depth and spaces of things, the sensuous presence of the world.

So why Forms, Appearances, and Representations? Well, think of a photograph of the street described above. Like a sentence, it's a description, or rather a transcription, it operates in the realm of depiction, not being, it is certainly not the street itself, it's a seeing of the street, a photographic seeing. Now think again about the narrow corridor of the Nauman installation. You enter it bodily. It is not a replica of another space. It is its own space. Your body negotiates this space, is a sensate experience. The negotiation of the photographic is a more cognitive experience.

Both Focillon and his pupil George Kubler have ably defended the idea that a work's significance is to be found as much from its position in a series of works coming before and after it as from its own peculiarities.

(Robert F. Trent, *Hearts and Crowns*)



52

**Whatever I Do
Comes from
Doing and
That's That**

Whatever I do comes from doing and only relates to what's done.

Art is always the event that puts on the now.

The close reading that may provide simultaneously a map to the future and the past. No doubt, this will accelerate.

To read and perform the technology, the texture, the media of the moment.

The death of art is trying to be art.

Can there be in Reinhardt's terms a pure art? I don't think so. Can there be a probing of possibility spaces and patterns, yet unfinished, *à la* Kubler? Yes, indeed.



I have made contact with matter.

This is the "primary process" of "making contact with matter," a process which Smithson feels is often overlooked in favour of the "finished" piece.

(Simon Sullivan)

But, how to consider the tragic through forms, and why? Or, perhaps, more poignantly, the form of living life as in how to live and why to live as an artist, and what is that work, and what is that being, that being art?

If much of my earlier works concerned various formats, opening them up,

repurposing them, cultural practices being reformatted by the network, its social protocols, its knowledge and work flows, its conversations, the speed and spread of information and misinformation, etc.,

I've wanted to take a step back to considered forms and objects, a very new encounter for me.

In many ways, my life is rather monk-like,

the singular life immanent to a man who no longer has a name, though he can be mistaken for no other.

(Gilles Deleuze, *Pure Immanence: Essays on a Life*)

A monk's life has a great deal of quietude. And I enjoy this. I need this.

Perhaps art is a giving shape to life, to our experience of being in the world and making that world, to shape and unshape forms, formats and representations. It is a way of going, a way bodies go, language goes, materials go, I go. I want to give shape to a becoming form, to forms that can take on multiple appearances, that can fold into themselves, hide within themselves, reveal themselves, this way and that. I am that shape, I am that form, that form begetting form, sensing it happening to me, through me. To some the "abyss" fills them with fear. I will not say that I am not afraid. But I have certainly known what it is not to know, and knowing that knowing will come, a knowing I don't have to think about.

I continually reimagine, rethink, reposition my work, my place in it, what it's about, what it wants to be...

how i want to go with it, and the very going of things. how goes this work? how goes this life? work and life, the work of life, a working life, life works us, me and you, us, me extended into you, you and everything, life is work, and yes, work can be play, whatever it is, it's a going, it goes at us, it is us going - so why art or what is this art that goes, or going with art, or art takes me, a way towards life, into life, with life, living, where do i want to go, an expression of going, a going that expresses, a going that knowingly expresses, let going go, a going of going, letting it go, letting go go. go as it may, go where it will, i go with it, it goes and i go, we go together, a body, a body in space and time, a body that does not go forever, a body of bodies, amongst bodies, of speeds and attributes, of encounters. art as encounter, as as event, eventful.

Art practice might then, like philosophy, involve intuition. An intuition incarnated in materials which takes us "beyond" the actual, plunges us deep into the virtual, before returning with new actualisations. Indeed art practice can be positioned





at that “seeping edge” between the existing state of affairs and a world “yet-to-come.” Again, this is not to position art as transcendent, for as we have seen the ontological coordinates of the actual and the virtual operate “within” immanence (*within* this world). The virtual does not *lack* a reality, but is merely that which has yet to be actualised.

(Simon Sullivan)

I find this incredibly beautiful.

For brief moments flying butterflies were reflected; they seemed to fly through a sky of gravel.

Here, from “The Third Mirror Displacement”:

In the side of a heap of crushed limestone the twelve mirrors were cantilevered in the midst of large clusters of butterflies that had landed on the limestone. For brief moments flying butterflies were reflected; they seemed to fly through a sky of gravel. Shadows cast by the mirrors contrasted with those seconds of colour. A scale in terms of “time” rather than “space” took place. The mirror itself is not subject to duration, because it is an ongoing abstraction that is always available and timeless. The reflections on the other hand, are fleeting instances that evade measure.

(Robert Smithson, “The Third Mirror Displacement”)

In each of the displacements Smithson “inserts” the mirrors *into* the earth. The mirrors then become *a part of* the landscape placed as they are in the geological ground zero of the desert. And yet the mirrors are also *apart from* the earth inasmuch as they reflect the sky (and other flora and fauna) and in so doing actualise other durations of organic and inorganic life.

(Simon Sullivan)

Perhaps art is the experience of those most uncertain, inchoate and unsettling intuitions, just before the brief flying of butterflies caught in a momentary reflection, a sky of gravel, a form becoming, coming undone, becoming other (however long or short).

Acknowledgements: The Event of Art

I especially want to thank punctum books and Eileen Joy. I have always been writing and enjoy working on the books I have published with her and the press. There is a great sense of freedom in writing and choosing an archive of images to communicate one's thoughts and feelings that need not go through all the legal channels so outdated and indeed for such a small audience. Small as it may be, and continually growing, I enjoy feeling part of a community of writers, though few of them I know, I like being here at punctum and what it represents.

My writing and curation is often my conversation with a multiplicity of texts and images, with search, and the lateral places it takes me. It is as if being in a great archival cut up machine whose serendipitous results give an ongoing image of myriad constellations.

I am very grateful to the brilliant Daniel Coffeen who for the last 20 years I have shared continual conversation about just how things go and therein make meanings. His dialogues with me are a great source of delight and pleasure. As well his writing. I am equally grateful to Mathieu Borysevicz who I met on my first and only artist residency which I took at the age of 44. Mathieu's success as a curator, art dealer and writer has given me opportunity to make much of the work in this book manifest in the physical world.

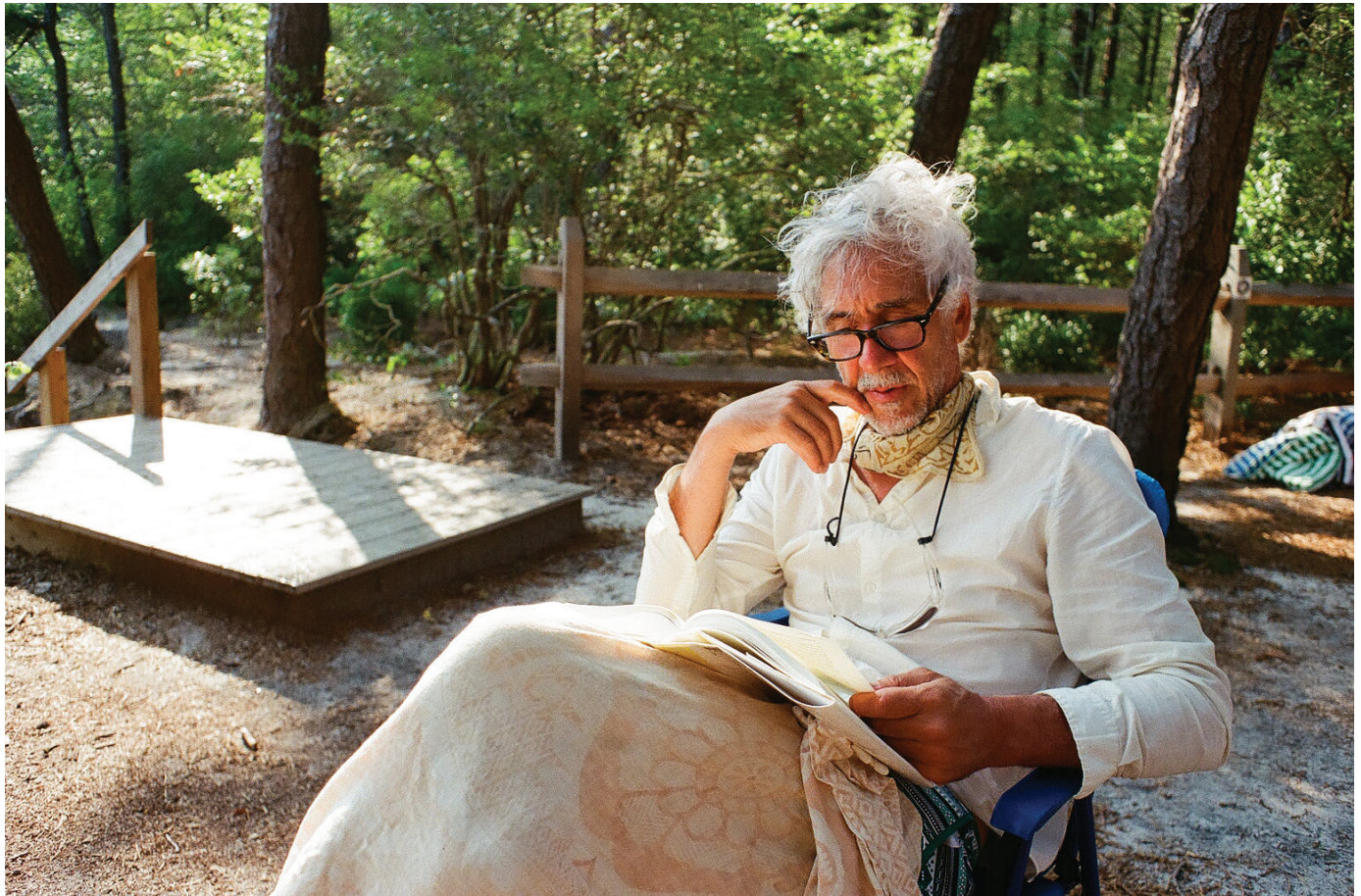
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marc lafia
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About the Author

Marc Lafia is an American artist and filmmaker whose work emerges with network culture as it redefines our relationship to knowledge, ourselves, our memories, and our bodies, from one of representation to presentation, and from contemplation to new modes of embodiment, producing new subjectivities and new ways of going in the world. In time his eclectic range of work including computational films, site specific installations, drawings, performances, momentary happenings, writings, social photography, paper, fabric and plastic sculptures, would carry his interest to the larger poetics of techne, and how and through our making and doing, our expressivity emerges. In each of his works there is playfulness, elegance, and philosophical tactility, each as much expressing him, bearing their traces.

Lafia has been exhibited at the Walker Art Center, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Tate, ZKM, the Centre Pompidou, Anthology Film Archives, International Film Festival Rotterdam, The Minsheng Museum of Art in Shanghai, and The Shenzhen Sculpture Biennale 2014, among other venues. He has taught at Stanford University, the San Francisco Art Institute, Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, Pratt Institute, and Columbia University. His books *Image Photograph* (2015) and *Everyday Cinema* (2017) were published by punctumbooks.